

# NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY

COUNTRY FOR LIFE | OCTOBER 26, 2015

**GEORGE STRAIT**  
IS BACK ON  
THE CHARTS  
AND THE  
STAGE

# RETURN OF THE KING

**PLUS!**

GO INSIDE THE  
MAKING OF HIS  
ARTISTIC NEW  
ALBUM COVER!



CMA AWARDS PREVIEW  
**AND THE  
NOMINEES  
ARE...**

PAGE 24

**NASH  
NEXT**  
ARTIST  
SPOTLIGHT  
**COLE  
SWINDELL**

**SAM HUNT**  
THROWS  
A "HOUSE  
PARTY"

DEAR DIARY:  
**CRAIG  
MORGAN**  
AND WIFE  
SHARE  
OVERSEAS  
ADVENTURES

**JOE  
BONSALL**  
THE FINAL  
CHAPTER OF  
OUR SERIES  
ON THE OAKS

COUNTRYWEEKLY.COM

\$3.99US \$3.99CAN

43>



**LONG LIVE** ex's that live in Texas.

**LONG LIVE** mornings in Amarillo.

**LONG LIVE** Fort Worth crossing your mind.

**LONG LIVE** the Lone Star's brightest.

**LONG LIVE COWBOYS.**<sup>®</sup>

**GEORGE STRAIT**  
in Relaxed Fit Cowboy Cut Jeans



**LONG LIVE COWBOYS.**

AVAILABLE AT:

**CAVENDER'S**

CAVENDERS.COM



**2010** SATURDAY,  
OCT. 23



## *Grand Night for Blake*

Award in front of a packed house. After opening the show with his hit "All About Tonight," Blake shared his thoughts about becoming an Opry member as he spoke from the hallowed stage. "I get the same feeling when I come to the Opry as when I see one of my heroes. I am in awe," Blake said. "To me, the Grand Ole Opry is an artist and I'm really proud to be one of its songs." Blake, who made his Grand Ole Opry debut in 2001, later performed "She Wouldn't Be Gone" and teamed with Trace on their then-recent hit, "Hillbilly Bone," before appropriately closing with "Home."

**2015**

### OCT. 19: **CHASING MIRANDA**

Your last chance to catch **MIRANDA LAMBERT** on tour, at least until next year, comes with her show at the Scotiabank Saddledome in Calgary, Alberta, Canada on Oct. 19.



### OCT. 23: **CARRIE ON**

It's a big day for **CARRIE UNDERWOOD** as she releases her much-anticipated new album,

*Storyteller*, on Oct. 23. The album includes the hit single "Smoke Break," plus a dozen additional tunes.



### OCT. 25: **HALL INDUCTIONS**

The newest members of the Country Music Hall of Fame—**JIM ED BROWN**

and **THE BROWNS**, **THE OAK RIDGE BOYS** and musician **GRADY MARTIN**—will be officially welcomed at the Hall of Fame's Medallion Ceremony on Oct. 25. Jim Ed and Grady will be inducted posthumously.



# CONTENTS

**NASH Country Weekly**  
October 26, 2015

## FEATURES

### 24 CMA Preview

The nominees have been announced for the 49th annual Country Music Association awards.

### 32 Joe Bonsall

In his offstage time, The Oak Ridge Boys' tenor vocalist finds his artistic voice writing books and memoirs.

### 36 Rainey Qualley

What's it like to make your Grand Ole Opry debut? The rising new star gives you a backstage glimpse.

### 46 Craig Morgan

The well-traveled singer and his wife share memories and photos of their summer trip through Europe.

### 50 Brantley Gilbert

Bringing hope and healing to the Chattanooga community was the goal of his concert for fallen military personnel.

### 52 Chelsea Bain

The country rocker shows the "Power of a Woman" during her Tae Bo workout with Billy Blanks.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 1 Then & Now

### 4 Letters

### 6 First Take

### 8 The Brew

### 18 Country Style

### 20 Southern Dish

### 22 Reviews

### 26 Who's New

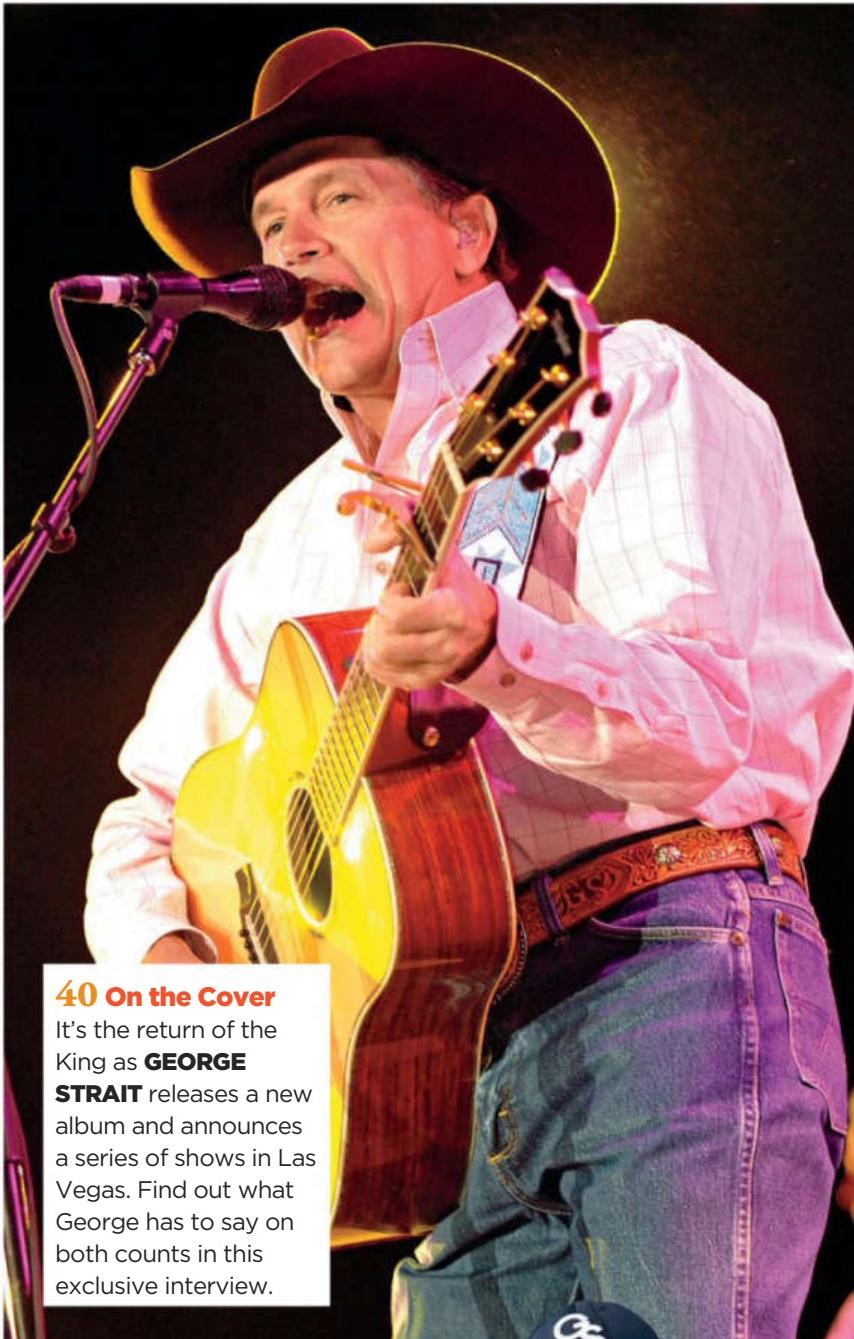
### 54 Behind the Song

### 56 Charts

### 58 Nash Flash

### 60 Puzzled

### 64 The Leftovers



### 40 On the Cover

It's the return of the King as **GEORGE STRAIT** releases a new album and announces a series of shows in Las Vegas. Find out what George has to say on both counts in this exclusive interview.

## PLUS!



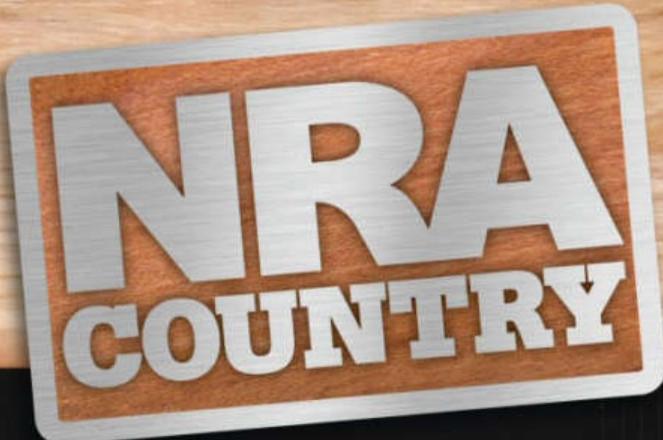
### 27 COLE SWINDELL

The Georgia-born singer has an amazing story to tell about his rise from merchandise hawker to hit-making star.

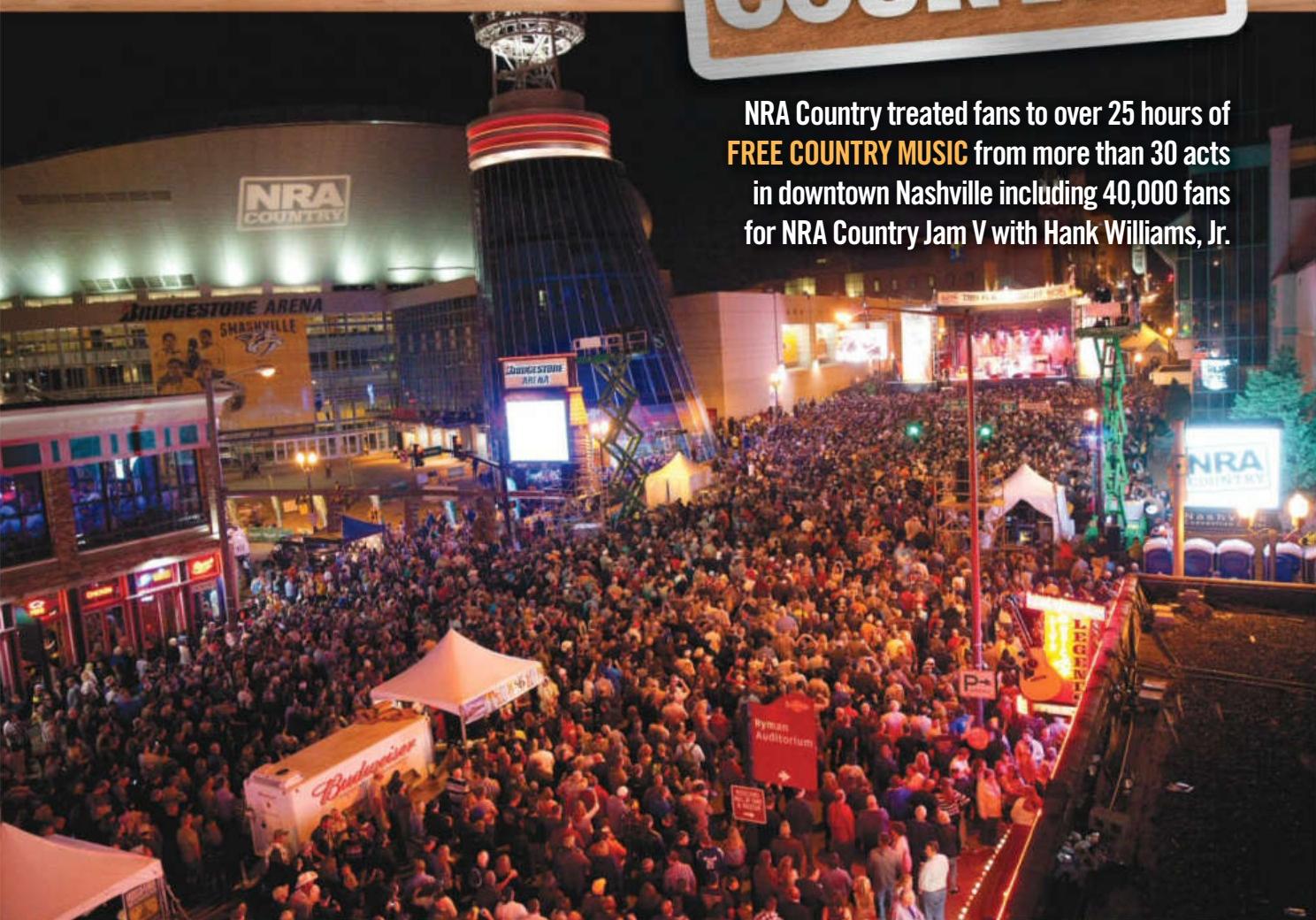


NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY (ISSN 2379-9137) VOL. 22 NO. 43, IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY NASH COUNTRY LLC, 506 2ND AVE. SOUTH, SUITE 200, NASHVILLE, TN 37210. PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT NASHVILLE, TN, AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. EDITORIAL OFFICES LOCATED AT NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY, 506 2ND AVE. SOUTH, SUITE 200, NASHVILLE, TN 37210. COPYRIGHT © NASH COUNTRY LLC 2015. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. SUBSCRIPTION RATE IS \$110.00 A YEAR IN U.S. ONLY. SUBSCRIPTIONS NOT AVAILABLE OUTSIDE THE U.S. U.S. POSTMASTER AND SUBSCRIBERS: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS (SEE DMM 7074.12.5); NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: SEND SUBSCRIPTION ADDRESS CHANGES AND ADJUSTMENTS. WRITE TO NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY, P.O. BOX 37463, BOONE, IA 50037-0463 OR CALL 1-877-566-5832. SUBSCRIBERS: IF THE POSTAL SERVICE ALERTS US THAT YOUR MAGAZINE IS UNDELIVERABLE, WE HAVE NO FURTHER OBLIGATION UNLESS WE RECEIVE A CORRECTED ADDRESS WITHIN ONE YEAR. FROM TIME TO TIME WE MAKE OUR SUBSCRIBER LIST AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES WHO SELL GOODS AND SERVICES BY MAIL. THAT WE BELIEVE WOULD INTEREST OUR READERS. IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT RECEIVE SUCH MAILINGS, PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT MAILING LABEL TO NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY, P.O. BOX 37463, BOONE, IA 50037-0463 PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

# THANK YOU NASHVILLE!



NRA Country treated fans to over 25 hours of **FREE COUNTRY MUSIC** from more than 30 acts in downtown Nashville including 40,000 fans for NRA Country Jam V with Hank Williams, Jr.



Crowd Photo: ERIC DRAPER

Wait till you see what's in store for 2016

# NRA COUNTRY JAM V

LOUISVILLE, KY ★ MAY 20-22

Visit [NRACOUNTRY.COM](http://NRACOUNTRY.COM) to get **NRA COUNTRY CONNECTED** and be the first to know!



# FROM THE EDITOR



## Dear Readers,

We have been waiting with bated breath here at the offices of *Nash Country Weekly* for the announcement of George Strait's new album. So when we finally got the call, we sent senior writer and George Strait aficionado Bob Paxman to Las Vegas to sit down with the King of Country. George never said he was retiring completely, only from touring, so the fact that he is putting out new music should come as no surprise. George

also has said that he would leave the door open for special events—and now we have a special event that brings George to Las Vegas. So check out our cover story on George and get the lowdown on his new music.

In the Nash Next section, we catch up with hitmaker Cole Swindell, who has been busy out on the road. And while Cole is having a ball being out on tour, we got him to talk about the upsides and downsides of success and fame.

We have come to the end of the road with our four-part series on The Oak Ridge Boys. We wrap the series with a portrait of lead singer Joe Bonsall, who has written more than a few books in his spare time. Joe talked to us about what drives him to continue putting pen to paper. We hope you enjoyed getting to know the guys individually as much as we enjoyed working with them.

Don't miss next week's issue, on stands Oct. 26, when we take a "Smoke Break" with Carrie Underwood.

**SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!**

**LISA KONICKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF**

## FROM THE READER



*Shoot us an email, a comment or a tweet and let us know what you think!*

Letters, *Nash Country Weekly*, 506 2nd. Ave. South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210

**EMAIL:**

[letters@countryweekly.com](mailto:letters@countryweekly.com)

**FACEBOOK:**

[facebook.com/countryweekly](http://facebook.com/countryweekly)

**TWITTER:**

[@countryweekly](http://@countryweekly)

Please include your name, address and daytime phone number with all correspondence. *Nash Country Weekly* assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material, including, but not limited to, photographs, artwork, manuscripts and letters. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

## THE GENTLE GIANT

I sincerely appreciated the Keith Urban and Lee Brice articles from your Sept. 7 issue. Allow me to offer some insight into a common factor in their success: their love and appreciation for "The

Gentle Giant," Don Williams. Lee listed "I Believe in You" for his wife Sara's mix tape, while Keith played "Making Memories of Us" in Don Williams' styling (including his guitar rendition of the Chuck Cochran piano stair-step

phrasing from "Love Me Over Again"). Keith and fellow artist Josh Turner (who includes a Williams song on every album) actively embrace a key Williams tenet in their own personal lives: "Never put anything (including music) above your spouse, family or faith!" And all three men will keep their fans forever, as Don has, by this maxim: "My idea of country music is as a FAMILY form of entertainment." Thank you for your excellent interviews!  
**CHERI STRAND BURNSED**  
**Fletcher, Okla.**

## FACEBOOK

She's 24 already?! [Aubrie Sellers] Wasn't she just dancing around in her mom's video a few years ago?! Wow, I feel old! Beautiful, definitely sounds a little like her mom, gorgeous voice!  
**MELISSA McGURK**

Thank you, Nash Next, for the great article on Josh Thompson. I've seen and met Josh in Nashville. He is an awesome country artist, he loves his fans and we love him. I'm excited for his new release, *Change*. His performance on the Opry was wonderful! Loved his vocals (heard every word), the lyrics, the rhythm, great instrumentals—there is something about the piano that really brings that melody to life and blends it all together.  
**DIANA BROWN**

Woohoo! Finally found you guys again. I've been in Texas almost two years and just today found a copy. I'm elated. Got my favorite magazine in hand and loving it all over again. Thank you.  
**SEALLIA LOVE**

## TWITTER

@littlebigtown Got my 2 copies of @countryweekly—one to read over and over and one to save. Such a nice article.  
**LORI EBER | @loriloriCM**

Daily reminder ... @chuckwicksmusic needs your votes for @countryweekly's #SexiestMan. Vote

**AMERICA'S MORNING SHOW**  
**@AmericasMorning**

Vote for @ScottyMcCreery for @countryweekly Sexiest Men of 2015 poll!! He was #2 last year!!

**SHARON JILES | @sharonjiles**

# 2015 **TUFF FEST**

DURING NFR  
DECEMBER 3 - 12  
OPEN 9 AM - 9 PM



LAS VEGAS

\*As low as  
**\$45/night!**

## Signings



## FREE Shuttle



All Day 10 am-6 pm

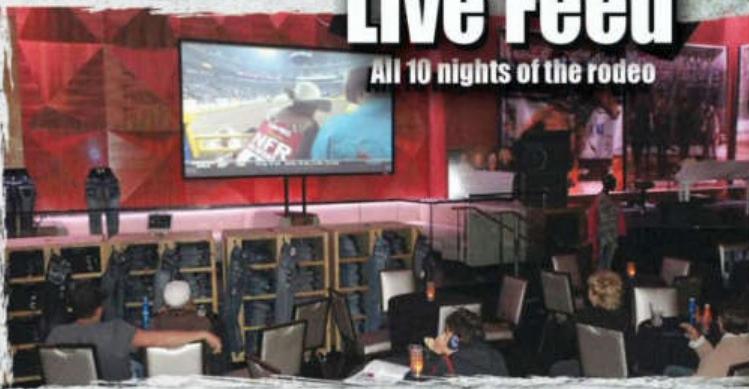
## Endless Shopping



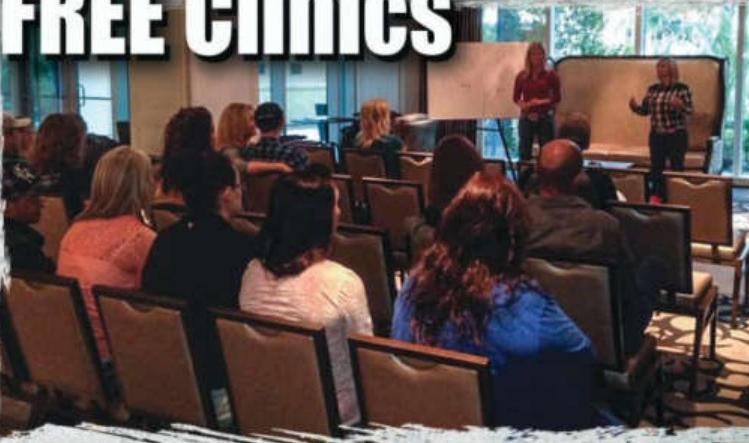
Gift with Purchase | Specials

## Live Feed

All 10 nights of the rodeo



## FREE Clinics



Never Give Up



B. REAL, B. STRONG, B. TUFF

**www.TuffFest.com**

## FIRST TAKE

### BUY ME A LAUGH

"Buy Me a Boat" singer Chris Janson (center) hams it up with his harmonica for three St. Jude kids as part of Country Cares at the Grand Ole Opry in September.





# THE COUNTRY BREW

A SWEET TASTE OF ALL THINGS COUNTRY

*Opening Act*

## THINK PINK

In a move that makes absolute and perfect sense, **KACEY MUSGRAVES** has been chosen to flip the switch on the seventh annual "Opry Goes Pink" show in conjunction with Women Rock for the Cure. The Oct. 27 show is the Opry's annual pledge of support in the fight against breast cancer, and will include Terri Clark and Montgomery Gentry performing in front of the pink-tinted barn backdrop. The Opry will donate \$5 from every ticket sold to Women Rock for the Cure, so make plans to come out for a worthy cause. And, following Kacey's eye-catching example, don't skimp on the pink!



**WIN A MEET & GREET WITH LOCASH**

AT THE 2015 NATIONAL FINALS RODEO!

ONE WINNER WILL RECEIVE:

**AIRFARE FOR TWO**

WITHIN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

**2 NIGHTS HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS**

AT THE MGM GRAND HOTEL

**\$500 ROPER SHOPPING SPREE**

AT THE ROPER COWBOY MARKETPLACE

**\$100 MGM FOOD/DRINK VOUCHER**

**TWO VIP WRISTBANDS**

FOR THE GOLD BUCKLE ZONE

**GO TO**

[www.eroper.com](http://www.eroper.com) AND ENTER TO WIN

**OR**

VISIT US AT [ROPERUSA](#) ON FACEBOOK



**LOCASH**

I LOVE THIS LIFE

[VISITLOCASHMUSIC.COM](http://VISITLOCASHMUSIC.COM)



**ROPER**  
WEAR THE WEST

[VISITEROPER.COM](http://VISITEROPER.COM) FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

# THE COUNTRY BREW

All Access



(Clockwise from above) **STAR-SPANGLED STAR** Trace Adkins sings the national anthem before the Titans vs. Colts football game in Nashville; **SPUD BUD** Kristian Bush and his pal Darth Tater hang out in the studio; **PILLOW TALK** Cassadee Pope comes in peace; **BABY BUMPIN'** It won't be long before Krystal Keith makes her dad, Toby, a grandfather for the third time.



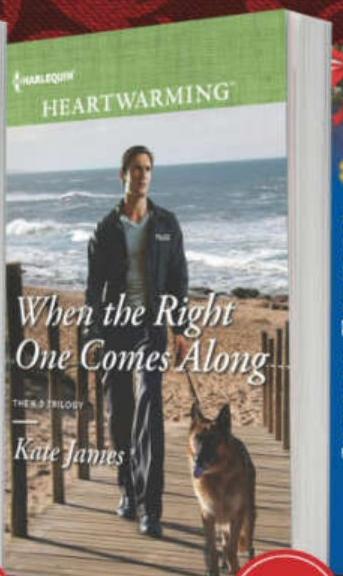


# INTO HOME & FAMILY ROMANCE?

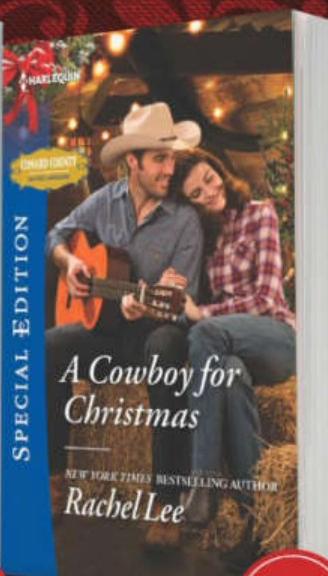
## WE HAVE THE PERFECT READ FOR YOU!



AVAILABLE  
NOW!

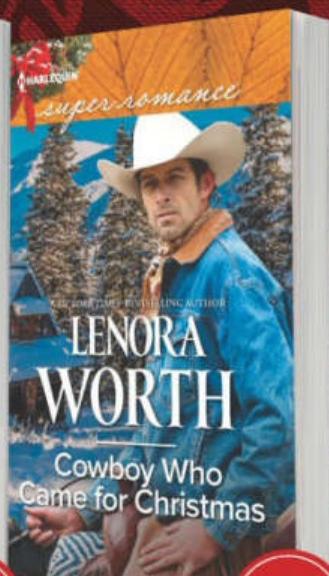


AVAILABLE  
NOW!



SPECIAL EDITION

ON SALE  
OCT. 20!



ON SALE  
NOV. 1!

### Harlequin® American Romance®

Romance the  
all-American way!

INCLUDES A BONUS  
SHORT STORY!

### Harlequin® Heartwarming™

Wholesome, Tender  
Romances.

### Harlequin® Special Edition

Life, Love & Family.

### Harlequin® Superromance®

More Story...  
More Romance.

STOCK UP ON HOME & FAMILY READS THIS FALL!



[www.Harlequin.com](http://www.Harlequin.com) • #WhateverYoureInto



## Twister and Shout

**THOMAS RHETT** took his talents to AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, to host Tangled Up in Texas, an event that set the Guinness World Record for the largest game of Twister. *Nash Nights Live* host Shawn Parr (below right) emceed the event, which also included a performance by Thomas Rhett that coincided with the release of his new album, *Tangled Up*.





Shawn Parr speaks with the Twister competition winner.



## UNDERWOOD OVERSEAS

**CARRIE UNDERWOOD** is not just a star stateside—she's a genuine international phenomenon who can represent country music in places that don't care about Tom Brady's deflated footballs. In fact, she already headlined one night of the Apple Music Festival from London in 2015, and she should be set up for a big 2016 with her new album, *Storyteller*, hitting stores in late October. In March, Carrie will return to the British Isles to play all three nights of the Country to Country 2016 Festival, which she first played in 2013, the fest's inaugural year. The gathering will now span three nights, with the addition of a March 11 date at Glasgow's Clyde Auditorium, followed by shows on March 12 at London's O2 Arena and March 13 at Dublin's 3 Arena. Carrie is the first artist to be announced for the 2016 gathering, so stay tuned for more updates.



## Where Dreams Come True

Some stars just can't seem to grow up, and that's a good thing in the case of *We Love Disney*, a new compilation album featuring a who's who of singing talent, including **GWEN STEFANI**, **ARIANA GRANDE**, **JASON DERULO**, **KACEY MUSGRAVES**, **RASCAL FLATTS** and more. The new album, which drops on Oct. 30, features 15 songs from various Disney movies. Kacey will tackle "Spoonful of Sugar" from *Mary Poppins*, while Rascal Flatts will team with Lucy Hale to sing the smash "Let It Go" from *Frozen*.



## BIRTHDAYS

OCT. 19, 1945  
**JEANNIE C. RILEY**

OCT. 19, 1976  
**CYNDI THOMSON**

OCT. 20, 1970  
**JIMI WESTBROOK**  
of Little Big Town

OCT. 22, 1968  
**SHELBY LYNNE**

OCT. 23, 1956  
**DWIGHT YOAKAM**

OCT. 23, 1972  
**JIMMY WAYNE**

OCT. 25, 1958  
**MARK MILLER**  
of Sawyer Brown

OCT. 25, 1970  
**CHELY WRIGHT**

# CROSSING OVER

Pop icon **CYNDI LAUPER** is planning her first foray into country music.



The 62-year-old artist, famous for pop anthems like "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and "Time After Time," recently announced plans to record

a country album. Cyndi is hoping to do the project, tentatively scheduled for release in 2016, with legendary producer Tony Brown (George Strait, Reba McEntire).

Olympic gold medalist and seven-time NHL All-Star **THEO FLEURY**



has traded in his ice skates for a microphone. Theo, who retired from hockey in 2009, dropped his first single, "My Life's Been a Country Song,"

in mid-September. His upcoming debut album, *I Am Who I Am*, will be released this week.

**LIAM PAYNE**, a member of the British-Irish pop boy band **ONE DIRECTION**,



has gotten the word out to the media that he's no stranger to country music, having penned a number of country songs in the past. He

also stated that if the right song came along, he wouldn't hesitate to release it as a solo artist.



At his No. 1 party, Sam Hunt (center) is flanked by songwriters (from left) Shane McAnally, Josh Osborne, Zach Crowell and Jerry Flowers.

# DOUBLING DOWN

## SAM HUNT "TAKE YOUR TIME" AND "HOUSE PARTY" NO. 1 PARTY THE CRYING WOLF | NASHVILLE

Sam Hunt knows how to throw a double No. 1 party: food trucks filled with hot chicken sliders from Riff's, Jeni's ice cream and a variety of crepes from Crepe A Diem, along with 100 of his closest friends at The Crying Wolf in Nashville.

"Take Your Time," which Sam co-wrote with Shane McAnally and Josh Osborne, and "House Party," which he co-wrote with Jerry Flowers and Zach Crowell, mark Sam's fourth and fifth No. 1 hits as a songwriter, respectively. Shane and Zach produced Sam's debut album, *Montevallo*, and for Jerry—who has spent 22 years touring with the likes of Keith Urban and was one of the original members of the trio The Ranch—"House Party" is his first No. 1 single as a songwriter.

While the success is sweet, and isn't lost on Sam, he now finds even deeper meaning in the music.

"Thank you, guys for investing your time and talent into this music," Sam said to his fellow songwriters. "I don't think I realized it when we were writing these songs, but now, after being on the road for a year, I have a new appreciation and understanding for how important these songs are. These songs are providing jobs for a lot of good people who are running around the country with us on the road now. They are giving fans the chance to come out, escape from reality and enjoy themselves. I get to watch these songs bring joy to people's lives every night, and it is just phenomenal. So thank you. I can't wait to get back in the [songwriting] room with you guys and do it all again."

ASHLEY EICHER

# METAMODERN **COLORS**



In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, **STURGILL SIMPSON** has re-released his acclaimed album *Metamodern Sounds in Country Music* on pink vinyl. Sturgill, along with other stars like hip hop's Run the Jewels and rock's Primus, are taking part in Ten

Bands One Cause, an initiative that raises money for Gilda's Club NYC, an organization providing community support for cancer patients.

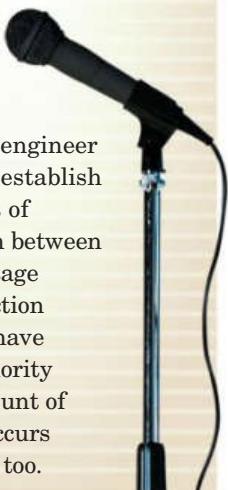
To order your record, visit [10bands1cause.com](http://10bands1cause.com).

## WHAT'S THAT?

### “TALKBACK MIC”

noun

Keen eyes at concerts may have spotted a random microphone onstage that doesn't seem to be there for anyone to sing into. Often situated near the drum platform or behind the lead singer, the “talkback mic” routes directly to the front-of-house engineer or producer to establish a direct means of communication between the bodies onstage and the production team. And we have it on good authority that a fair amount of shenanigans occurs on “talkbacks,” too.



## CROSS COUNTRY

	WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE POTATO CHIP FLAVOR?	WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ALWAYS WANTED AS A KID, BUT NEVER GOT?	WHAT IS THE ONE CHORE YOU HAVE NEVER DONE?
GARY LeVOX	Pringles' Salt & Vinegar.	A mom [laughs].	Mopped.
JAY DeMARCUS	Baked Doritos.	A swimming pool in the backyard.	I have never gotten one of those duster things and dusted off things.
JOE DON ROONEY	Cheddar Harvest Sun Chips.	Self-esteem [laughs]. No, what I really wanted that I never could afford was a moped. All the other kids had one but we couldn't get one.	Vacuumed.
KRISTIAN BUSH	Salt & Vinegar.	BB gun.	I'm a single dad. I've pretty much done all the chores at this point.

"SHAVING WITH SOAP AND WATER  
WON'T GET YOUR LEGS  
THIS SOFT AND SMOOTH!"

- Jana Kramer



SHAZAM THIS PAGE  
TO PREVIEW HER ALBUM



JANA  
KRAMER

thirty one | Available now!

To hear songs from her new album  
and enter for a chance to win a  
Jana Kramer Prize Package, visit  
[janakramer.com/PureSilk](http://janakramer.com/PureSilk)



PureSilk®

Pure Silk Shave Cream contains aloe to moisturize your skin,  
giving you the smoothest, most touchable legs without irritation.  
Shaving with Pure Silk is the easiest way to *love your legs!*

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE 48 CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES (D.C.) 13 AND OLDER. VOID IN AK, HI AND WHERE PROHIBITED. Ends 10/31/15. For Official Rules, prize descriptions and odds disclosure, visit [janakramer.com/PureSilk](http://janakramer.com/PureSilk)

# THE COUNTRY BREW

Country Style



## On the FRINGE

It's everywhere, from bags and boots to vests and sport coats. Fringe has never exactly been out of style in country music, but this fall it is being seen in abundance, inspired by the Bohemian trends of summer festivals.

**FREE  
Personalization**

# Dazzling with the Beauty of a Timeless Romance...



Shown larger  
than actual size

## Forever Love Crystal Birthstone Ring

*Solid  
Sterling Silver*

*Customized with  
Your Crystal Birthstones*

*18K  
Gold-Plated Accents*



### Forever As One

Celebrate the beauty of your romance when you wear our exclusive "Forever Love" Crystal Birthstone Ring! Finely hand-crafted of solid sterling silver, this custom jewelry design shimmers with two heart-shaped crystal birthstones on either side of an 18K gold-plated wave that joins the hearts together. The double-style band sparkles with more crystals in a stunning pavé. The ring's band is engraved with your two names as a unique expression of your love!

### A Remarkable Value... Not Available in Stores

Available in women's whole and half sizes, the ring arrives complete with a presentation case and Certificate of Authenticity. It is a superb value at \$99\*, payable in 4 easy installments of \$24.75. To reserve yours, backed by our unconditional 120-day guarantee, send no money now; just mail the Reservation Application today!

**RESERVATION APPLICATION**      **SEND NO MONEY NOW**

**THE  
BRADFORD EXCHANGE  
JEWELRY**

P.O. Box 806, Morton Grove, IL 60053-0806

**YES.** Please reserve my ring with the names and birthstones indicated below.  
(Print names and corresponding abbreviation of each 3-letter month in block letters. Names are limited to 10 characters each.) Ring Size \_\_\_\_\_ (if known)

Name	Birth Month

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**SATISFACTION GUARANTEED.**

To assure a proper fit, a ring sizer will be sent to you after your reservation has been accepted.\*Plus a total of \$9.98 shipping and service. Please allow 4-6 weeks after initial payment for delivery. All sales are subject to product availability and order acceptance.

**01-19359-001-E08101**

# ALOHA . . . HAWAIIAN CHICKEN

**COUNTRY NEWCOMER SARABETH TURNS TO HER GREAT-GRANDMOTHER'S CHICKEN RECIPE FOR HOME-COOKED GOODNESS.**

**PHOTOS BY ASHLEY HYLBERT**

**RISING COUNTRY STAR** SaraBeth savors coming off the road for one main tasty reason: the chance to whip up a good, home-cooked meal. The Dallas native—now based in Nashville—just released her current single, “Runnin’ Outta Lipstick,” and recently completed tours of the Northwest and the U.K., where she definitely got her fill of road cuisine.

“When you’ve been gone for so long and all you’ve eaten is catered food or restaurant food, you just want a home-cooked meal,” she says with a smile. And when she’s home, the young singer turns to a family favorite to get the job done—a Hawaiian chicken recipe handed down from her great-grandmother. “I used to visit her growing up,” SaraBeth recalls. “She’s actually the first person who got me interested in country music. She came up with this recipe and it’s kind of been handed down. Every summer when we grill chicken, it’s always this recipe that we use.”

SaraBeth invited *Nash Country Weekly* to her manager’s place for a little demonstration of the dish. “This can make several meals,” she says. “The best thing about it is that it’s so simple. And it’s delicious, too.”

**BOB PAXMAN**



## ME MAW'S HAWAIIAN CHICKEN

Serves 6

6-8 chicken breasts

½ cup soy sauce

½ cup brown sugar

3 drops Tabasco sauce

1 ½ tsp. ground ginger

½ tsp. paprika

1 clove garlic

1 cup pineapple juice

¼ cup melted butter or margarine

½ cup water

1 can pineapple slices



MIX ingredients (except pineapple slices) together and MARINATE chicken 3 hours, turning every 30 minutes.

GRILL chicken until done. Top chicken with pineapple slices. Serve with rice or chicken-flavored Rice-a-Roni.





## *Singles*

### **Joe Nichols** “Freaks Like Me”

RED BOW RECORDS

**B+**

Nestled amidst the abundant crop of releases from country music's much-maligned wunderkinder is Joe Nichols' most recent effort—a sturdy mid-tempo anthem that strays far from the buzzwords and

buzzy production prominent in so many of today's hits. That makes it unusual, abnormal or, yes, even “freakish” in comparison to its contemporaries, but refreshing to those who hanker for something different. Of course, the “freak” that songwriters Monty Criswell, Josh Thompson and Lynn Hutton refer to here is the kind of person who, as the lyric states, is *just outside the in-crowd*,

*out of style and damn proud.* Joe's honey-smooth vocals give the tune an almost sleepy feel that contradicts the thumping groove, creating a unique, unapologetic vibe that makes you want to listen again.

#### **LONG STORY SHORT:**

If “Freaks Like Me” is the new normal, we'll take it.

**TAMMY RAGUSA**

# THE NCW JUKEBOX

Essential songs from the artists featured in this issue.

## GEORGE STRAIT

"Cold Beer Conversation"

## COLE SWINDELL

"Let Me See Ya Girl"

## THE OAK RIDGE BOYS

"Sweet Jesus"

## RAINEY QUALLEY

"Me and Johnny Cash"

## CRAIG MORGAN

"When I'm Gone"

## BRANTLEY GILBERT

"Stone Cold Sober"

## CHELSEA BAIN

"Power of a Woman"

## SARABETH

"Runnin' Outta Lipstick"

## ABBEY CONE

"Love Like Him Again"

## FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

"Anything Goes"

## STURGILL SIMPSON

"Life of Sin"

## KACEY MUSGRAVES

"Biscuits"

LOOK FOR THIS  
NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY  
PLAYLIST ON



## Jo Dee Messina

"Will You Love Me"

COUNTRY NOW

B

Just for the record, so to speak, Jo Dee's new single has been released through YouTube's dedicated country music channel Country Now.

You can find it on iTunes, too, should you wish to snag a copy of your own. Jo Dee takes an adventurous route, going fully acoustic to deliver a powerful message on phony friendship and folks who stay in your corner only as long as the lights are burning brightly. Not that it's exactly "Positively 4th Street," but we can be grateful for some subject matter that actually contains a little depth. Jo Dee takes what must certainly be a difficult song to render, given its range requirements, and nails the emotion without going overboard. You likely won't catch this one on your favorite station, as the sparse production makes the tempo seem a bit draggy. At the same time, given the song's relatively new YouTube delivery model,



Country Now.

You can find it on iTunes, too, should you wish to snag a copy of your own. Jo Dee takes an adventurous route, going fully acoustic to deliver a powerful message on phony friendship and folks who stay in your corner only as long as the lights are burning brightly. Not that it's exactly "Positively 4th Street," but we can be grateful for some subject matter that actually contains a little depth. Jo Dee takes what must certainly be a difficult song to render, given its range requirements, and nails the emotion without going overboard. You likely won't catch this one on your favorite station, as the sparse production makes the tempo seem a bit draggy. At the same time, given the song's relatively new YouTube delivery model,

airplay might not be the goal here. Seek this out for yourself and give it a shot.

BOB PAXMAN

## Jon Pardi

"Head Over Boots"

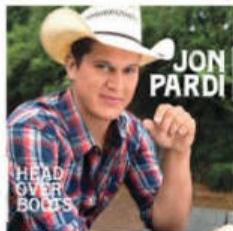
CAPITOL NASHVILLE

B+

The "traditional country" label is a slippery moniker that can often be found as a descriptor for numerous eras of country music, depending on one's point of view. In the case of "traditional country" crooner Jon Pardi,

the decade is the 1990s. His new tune, "Head Over Boots," toes the line of '90s-era George and Alan but with a conscious effort to make it radio-friendly in 2015. Fortified with dance-hall appeal, a catchy hook, fiddle and steel, not to mention a pretty sicko electric guitar solo, "Head Over Boots" is primed to kick its way into the Top 30, something his previous two singles failed to do.

JIM CASEY



## Album



## Bart Crow

*The Parade*

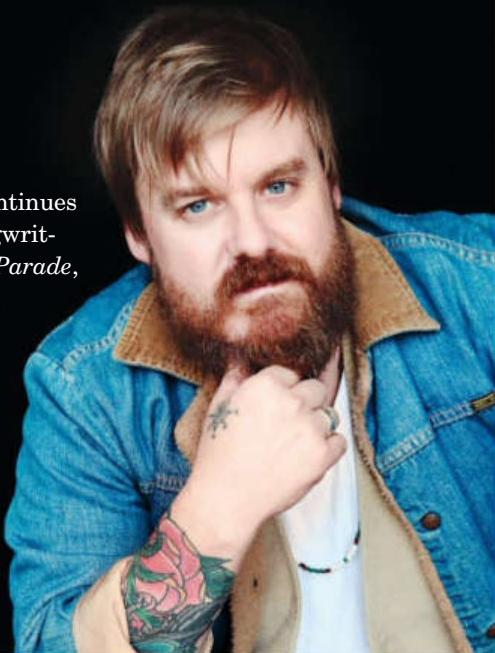
THIRTY TIGERS

B

Texas favorite Bart Crow continues his confessional style of songwriting on his sixth album, *The Parade*,

meditating on women, living in the moment and even the salvation-giving aspects of music. Mostly it alternates between jangly, roots-pop numbers like "Vapor Trails" and "Dear Music" that don't shy away from addictive hooks, and a few more forgettable, maudlin mid-tempos. To his credit, Bart sounds a little like a cross between Tom Petty and Son Volt's Jay Farrar, giving songs like "Life Comes at You Fast" a well-worn realism that should illustrate why he's become one of the Lone Star State's bright lights.

JON FREEMAN



# CMA ALL THE WAY



The 49th annual CMA Awards,  
once again hosted by Brad  
Paisley and Carrie Underwood,  
will broadcast live from  
Nashville on Wednesday,  
Nov. 4, at 8 p.m. EST on ABC.  
So get ready to celebrate with  
country music's biggest  
stars. Without further ado,  
the nominees are:

## ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

GARTH BROOKS  
LUKE BRYAN  
KENNY CHESNEY  
ERIC CHURCH  
MIRANDA LAMBERT

## FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

KELSEA BALLERINI  
MIRANDA LAMBERT  
KACEY MUSGRAVES  
CARRIE UNDERWOOD  
LEE ANN WOMACK

## MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

DIERKS BENTLEY  
LUKE BRYAN  
ERIC CHURCH  
BLAKE SHELTON  
CHRIS STAPLETON

## VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

LADY ANTEBELLUM  
LITTLE BIG TOWN  
RASCAL FLATTS  
THE BAND PERRY  
ZAC BROWN BAND

## VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

BROTHERS OSBORNE  
DAN + SHAY  
FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE  
MADDIE & TAE  
THOMPSON SQUARE

## NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

KELSEA BALLERINI  
SAM HUNT  
MADDIE & TAE  
THOMAS RHETT  
CHRIS STAPLETON

## ALBUM OF THE YEAR

OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT  
JASON ALDEAN  
produced by Michael Knox  
PAGEANT MATERIAL  
KACEY MUSGRAVES  
produced by Kacey Musgraves, Luke Laird and Shane McAnally

PAIN KILLER  
LITTLE BIG TOWN  
produced by Jay Joyce

THE BIG REVIVAL  
KENNY CHESNEY  
produced by Buddy Cannon and Kenny Chesney

TRAVELLER  
CHRIS STAPLETON  
produced by Dave Cobb and Chris Stapleton

## SINGLE OF THE YEAR

“AMERICAN KIDS”  
KENNY CHESNEY  
produced by Buddy Cannon and Kenny Chesney

“GIRL CRUSH”  
LITTLE BIG TOWN  
produced by Jay Joyce

“I DON’T DANCE”  
LEE BRICE  
produced by Lee Brice

## “TAKE YOUR TIME”

SAM HUNT  
produced by Zach Crowell and Shane McAnally

## “TALLADEGA”

ERIC CHURCH  
produced by Jay Joyce and Arturo Buenahora Jr.

## SONG OF THE YEAR

“AMERICAN KIDS”  
KENNY CHESNEY

written by Rodney Clawson, Luke Laird and Shane McAnally

## “GIRL CRUSH”

LITTLE BIG TOWN  
written by Liz Rose, Lori McKenna and Hillary Lindsey

“LIKE A COWBOY”  
RANDY HOUSER  
written by Randy Houser and Brice Long

“LIKE A WRECKING BALL”  
ERIC CHURCH  
written by Eric Church and Casey Beathard

“TAKE YOUR TIME”  
SAM HUNT  
written by Sam Hunt, Shane McAnally and Josh Osborne

## MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

“BISCUITS”  
KACEY MUSGRAVES  
directed by Marc Klasfeld



## “GIRL CRUSH”

LITTLE BIG TOWN  
directed by Karla Welch and Matthew Welch

## “GIRL IN A COUNTRY SONG”

MADDIE & TAE  
directed by TK McKamy

## “LITTLE RED WAGON”

MIRANDA LAMBERT  
directed by Trey Fanjoy

## “SOMETHING IN THE WATER”

CARRIE UNDERWOOD  
directed by Raj Kapoor

## MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

SAM BUSH  
mandolin

JERRY DOUGLAS  
Dobro

PAUL FRANKLIN  
steel guitar

DANN HUFF  
guitar

MAC MCANALLY  
guitar

# ABBEY CONE

Abbey has made her mark on the Texas music scene, performing in writer's rounds and acoustic shows with artists like Josh Abbott and Stoney LaRue, and at the Larry Joe Taylor Music Festival. Now, Nashville—where she just signed her first publishing deal—seems to be embracing her, too.

## Current Single

"Love Like Him Again"

## Hometown

Argyle, Texas

## Musical Soundtrack of Her Childhood

Patsy Cline, Willie Nelson, Bob Wills

## HEALING HARMONIES

"When I was about 12, I had a good friend pass away—I think it was seventh or eighth grade—and I didn't get to go to the funeral because I had to go to Nashville. So, I ended up writing 'I'll See You' about [my late friend] Alex. It was my first co-write, and we ended up recording it and I gave it to his parents. After we wrote that song, I realized that I didn't just write it. It did something for me. It helped me heal and get through that. I think when I realized it was more than just writing a song, that's when I really started writing."

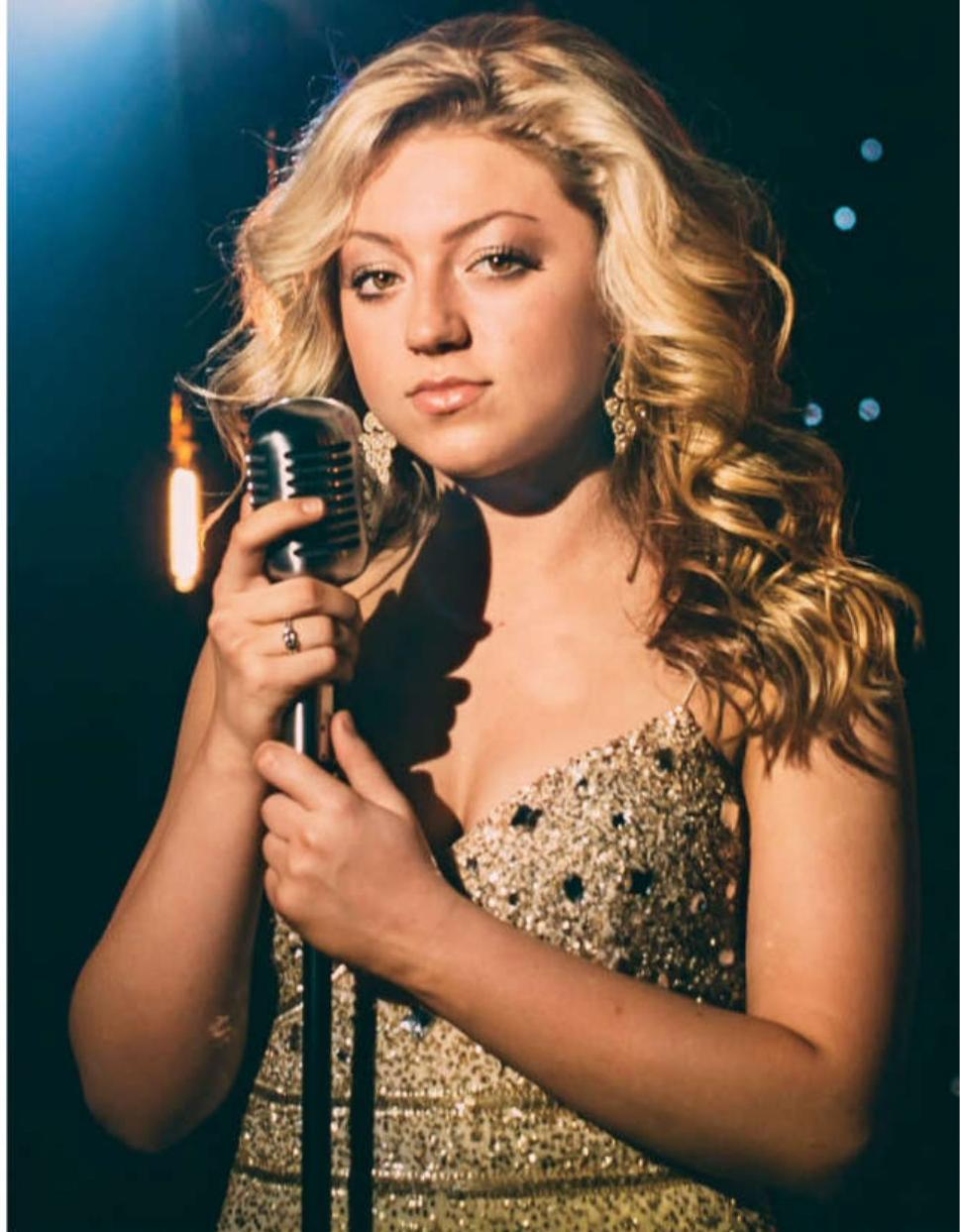


photo by Natalie Rhee/RPR Media

## RODEO DRIVE

"My whole family rodeos. All my siblings rodeo. So, from the time I was born, pretty much, I was always at rodeos. We had a bus and we would take our bus with our trailer to all these different rodeos across the country. By the time I was old enough to realize I was covered in dirt, I just didn't want a part of it. It isn't that I don't want to do rodeo; I'm scared to death of horses. That's

what I did at all the rodeos. I ended up singing the national anthem at them—especially the Stockyards. When I was 7, I sang the national anthem there and I made my mom hold my hand and walk out there."

## TENNESSEE WALTZING

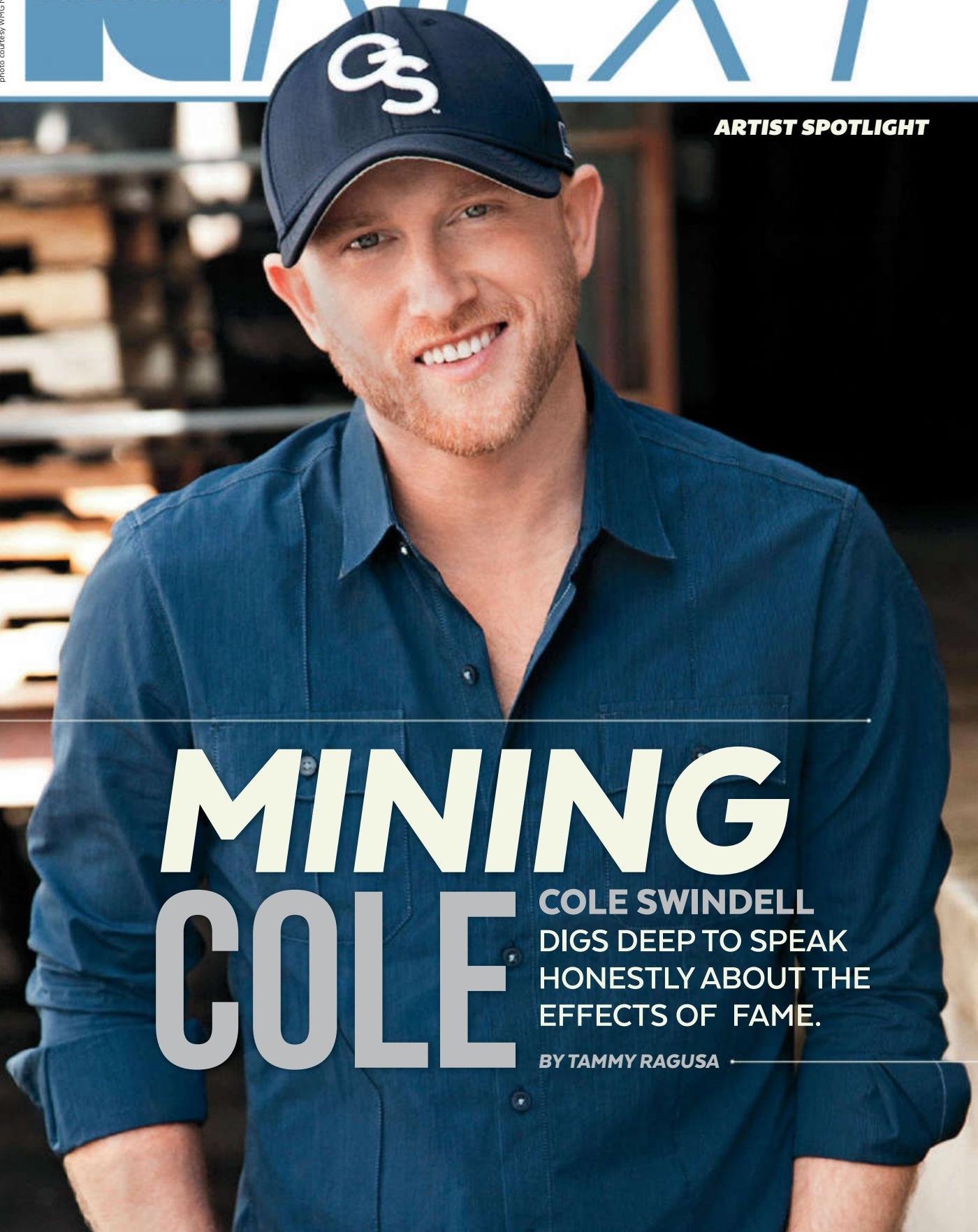
"The best part of being in Tennessee, now that I don't feel like a visitor, is that if you're not from here you

think the big places are Broadway and Tootsie's and the Grand Ole Opry and stuff. It's been really, really cool to find the stuff the locals go to. But people here are so nice. Everyone has been so nice. When you realize that everyone here is trying to get to the same place, but you don't think of it as a competition, you feel like you're in your element. And it's so creative."

**TAMMY RAGUSA**

NASH  
NEXT

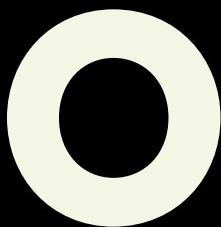
ARTIST SPOTLIGHT



# MINING COLE

**COLE SWINDELL**  
DIGS DEEP TO SPEAK  
HONESTLY ABOUT THE  
EFFECTS OF FAME.

BY TAMMY RAGUSA



In paper, he's one of the most successful new artists in country music. Cole Swindell's first three singles—"Chillin' It," "Hope You Get Lonely Tonight" and "Ain't Worth the Whiskey"—from his self-titled debut album topped the charts. The fourth, "Let Me See Ya Girl," shows all the signs of doing the same. He also co-wrote all of those, as well as Florida Georgia Line's "This Is How We Roll," Thomas Rhett's "Get Me Some of That" and Craig Campbell's "Outta My Head," and toured with Luke Bryan and Jason Aldean. He even shared the stage with Kenny Chesney.

But in person or, in this case, over the phone, Cole is the same warm and unassuming Georgia boy we first saw a few years ago when he was the opener on Luke Bryan's Farm Tour in 2012. But even he admits that his meteoric rise to the top has left his head spinning a bit.

Asking Cole how he was adjusting to his newfound fame, he still sounds a little awestruck by it all. "I think you have big dreams of being in the company of Luke Bryan and Jason Aldean, but not right off the bat," he says humbly. "That's why I don't miss a chance to let everybody know how thankful I am and how lucky I feel, because I've been around the business long enough to know that it doesn't happen like this. You may go your whole career and not have three No. 1 songs, and here I am starting off my career with three."

He credits the years he spent in Nashville watching his friends and peers get record deals, make albums and go on tour as being pivotal in his music-biz education, adding that he's grateful his time in the spotlight didn't arrive sooner because he simply wasn't ready for it. But Cole also had a different idea of what being "ready for it" meant, and that involved knowing what to do with fame.

"When this is what you've always

wanted, and here you are—boom!—what are you going to do with it?" he says. "You've been given a platform and you better do some good with it. And that's what I'm trying to do, just let everybody be a part of this. It wouldn't be any fun doing it by yourself and I couldn't do it. To have so much support in Nashville, too, it really does mean a lot because there's so much talent and so many new artists that haven't had their chance yet, but they will. I'm just looking for my place to be able to maybe open

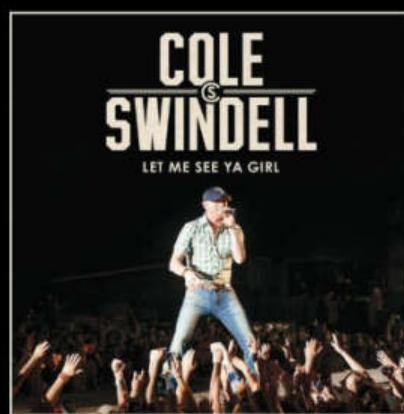
the door for somebody that maybe couldn't get it going. I know that's happened to me."

He is, of course, referring to Luke taking time to listen to him when he was just an aspiring songwriter selling merch for the superstar. Luke eventually took him on the road, and Cole is already returning that same kind of favor, putting his pal Adam Sanders in the opening slot on his own Down Home Tour starting in November. "He's right on the verge of getting that record deal," Cole says with as much excitement for his friend as he's shown for himself.

But with the freedom that fame has afforded him, there have also been pitfalls. Cole is keenly aware that not everyone who approaches him has the best intentions. We ask him how he deals with phonies and those who want to get close to him or use him for his connections, and his voice aches audibly as he says, "That is hard, too, because you don't really know. Before all this happened, I wanted to find somebody to settle down with, but you never know what people are after, so it changes everything. But I think I'm a pretty good judge of character."

He actually has always been cautious about whom he lets into his inner circle, but not for the reasons you might think. His explanation rings true in a manner similar to that of the Dierks Bentley song "My Last Name." "Right now it's not my drummer or my guitar player, it's Cole Swindell's drummer, it's all tied to my name," he says. "My granddad was so proud of our family name and he encouraged me, in a good way, not to do anything to harm that. That's just the way I want to do it."

Another obstacle that Cole quickly learned to overcome was losing his anonymity. But, with his ever-sunny outlook, he even finds an upside to that. "I remember years ago, saying that if I ever had the chance, I would sign everything, try to take pictures with everyone, and you get to see how hard that actually is to do the more successful you become. You really



# "I DON'T MISS A CHANCE TO LET EVERYONE KNOW HOW THANKFUL I AM AND HOW LUCKY I FEEL."



# CHILLIN' IT DOWN

## WHAT DOES COLE DO TO UNWIND?

"I'm a golf freak. If we can play, I'm playing. I'm not the best golfer by any means, I just love to play. It was something my dad always loved to do. Earlier this year, I got to play at Augusta National. I've done some pretty cool things and had amazing moments in my career in this short two years, but I know that's probably the coolest thing my dad would have thought I ever did was play that course."



Cole revs up the crowd at the 2015 ACM Party for a Cause in Las Vegas.





“YOU’VE BEEN GIVEN  
A PLATFORM AND  
YOU BETTER DO  
SOME GOOD WITH IT.  
AND THAT’S WHAT  
I’M TRYING TO DO.”

Cole at ACM Awards by Cooper Neill/Academy of Country Music; Cole & Luke by Kevin Winter/Getty Images; Cole & Shane by Amilee Stubbs; Cole, Kip, Jason & Luke courtesy Cole Swindell Facebook; Cole & Adam courtesy Adam Sanders' Facebook



**(Above)** At the American Country Countdown Awards with Luke Bryan; **(above right)** at the “Chillin’ It” No. 1 party with hit songwriter Shane Minor; **(below from left)** Cole with fellow Georgia boys Kip Moore, Jason Aldean and Luke Bryan; **(right)** chillin’ with pal Adam Sanders in Panama City Beach.



can’t. I’m kind of a private person, but then again, I have to look at it from the other side. This is a lot better than them *not* wanting my picture,” he says, laughing. “And you do have to deal with those people who aren’t respectful, but I still think the fact that I get to do what could possibly make somebody’s day, when you’ve been helped out so much . . .” He pauses, seeking words to express his apparent desire to pay his good fortune forward. One person whose day he is especially insistent upon making is his mother. While many young stars splurge on motorcycles, boats, pimped-out trucks and beach homes, Cole bought himself a modest place in Nashville and turned his attention toward his mom, who had just undergone back surgery. “She’s taken care of me my whole life, so anything she needs, she’s getting,” he says firmly. “I want her to be able to come out and experience this. She’s

retired, and she worked her whole life to take care of me. It broke her heart when I moved to Nashville and, honestly, I don’t think anybody had seen me play or knew I loved it like I did, but getting the chance to take care of her and anything she needs, I’m there. My mom and my place, that’s what I’ve been splurging on.”

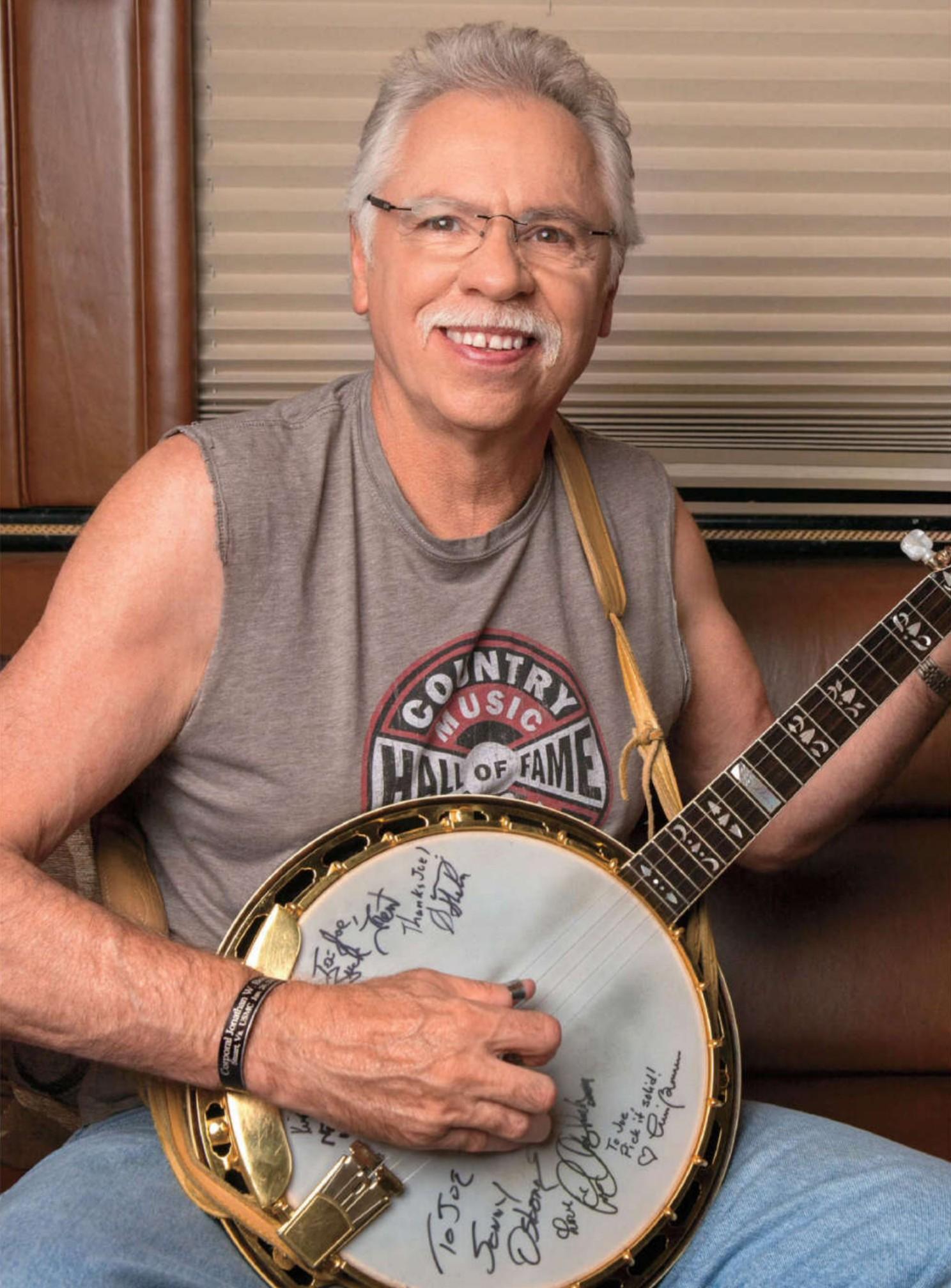
While his mom is obviously a special lady, the 32-year-old entertainer is open to inviting another special lady to share his new home. When reminded that he had previously mentioned finding someone to settle down with, he laughs, but also hints that he has met someone who is “super-awesome.” He quickly adds, “It’s tough, being so busy. I just want to make sure that I’m in the right place when I do that. Finding somebody that really cares about me, I’ve always prayed for that and now that I’ve maybe met one like that, I’m scared to settle down.” He laughs and

adds, “So I’m still single.”

He’s also incredibly grateful and humble to the point of disbelief. “It’s so weird that I’m still the same guy, but I have fans of my music, and stories from fans of songs that got them through crazy times. It’s hard for me to believe it’s my music doing that. It makes me want to make better music.”

This subject brings up that oh-so-important sophomore album. Although he is still in the early stages of writing and recording, Cole knows what he wants this album to accomplish. “This next album, I want it to make a statement. Whatever I come out with, I want it to say, ‘This guy is here to stay.’”

He pauses again to collect his thoughts, finding the conclusion that had earlier eluded him. “And every day I know how fortunate I am. If you can take that and do something good with it, I don’t know why you wouldn’t.” ■



COUNTRY  
MUSIC  
HALL OF FAME

To Joe, Thanks!  
Jimmy Fortune

To Joe,  
Thanks!  
Paul Oakenfold

To Joe,  
Pick it sold!  
Jim Lauderdale

# AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

IN THE FINAL PART OF OUR FOUR-PART SERIES ON  
**THE OAK RIDGE BOYS**, TENOR **JOE BONSALL** FULFILLS HIS  
OFFSTAGE CALLING BY WRITING BOOKS AND WEBSITE ESSAYS.

STORY BY BOB PAXMAN

The Oak Ridge Boys—Duane Allen, Joe Bonsall, William Lee Golden and Richard Sterban—represent four distinct personalities who have managed to blend together as one unified quartet for more than 40 years. Perhaps one reason for their longevity is that all four enjoy their own personal hobby that keeps them occupied and fulfilled when they're not on the road or making music in the studio.

As the Oaks' Oct. 25 Country Music Hall of Fame induction draws nigh, *Nash Country Weekly* brings you the final segment in the four-part series profiling each member and his own unique hobby. Here, tenor singer Joe Bonsall recalls how his love of reading led to his current offstage pursuit of writing books and essays.

As a kid growing up in the urban confines of Philadelphia, young Joe Bonsall used a finely tempered imagination to create his own world, inhabited by a colorful cast of heroes and arch-villains. "I have always been an avid reader," says Joe, practically brimming with enthusiasm, which is his usual state. If there were no such term as "boundless energy," it would have to be invented for the 67-year-old singer, who's been with the Oaks for 42 years. "And I started writing books when I was a kid. At first, I wrote stories about make-



(Above) Teenager Joe holds the family pup, Lucky, in this vintage Christmas photo; (below from left) Duane Allen, Joe, Steve Sanders, who briefly joined the Oaks in 1987, and Richard Sterban.



believe baseball teams. I also had this superhero detective named Providence Joe, who was a Rhode Island Western gunfighter guy. I don't even know how I came up with that," Joe adds, letting go an extended laugh.

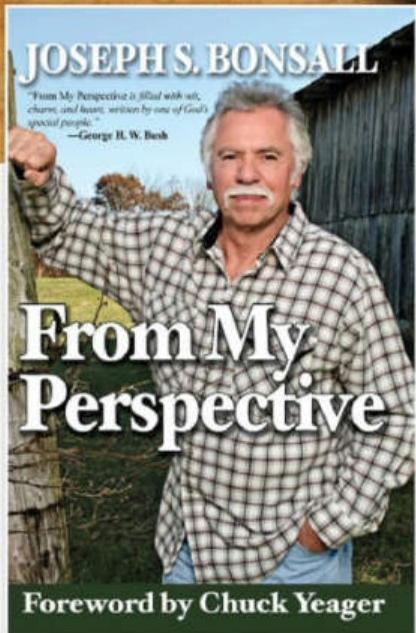
A budding Hemingway in the

works? Well, not exactly. Young Joe, influenced by the dazzling harmonies of the Philly doo-wop groups and, believe it or not, Southern gospel singers, turned to music as his away-from-school savior. "I was not very good in school, to be honest, because I was so focused on music," he recalls. "I was immersed in it. I never thought I would actually be a writer. In fact, if any of my teachers knew that I had a byline on anything, I'm sure they'd be twisting and turning in their graves."

The cemeteries must be rocking around the clock today, because Joe has turned his youthful interest into a blooming second career. Under his formal name, Joseph S. Bonsall, Joe has authored 10 books, ranging from a children's series to personal reflections and a couple of historical chronicles of The Oak Ridge Boys, written 11 years apart.

His first bylines came coincidentally as The Oak Ridge boys started to achieve some mainstream success after debuting on the country charts in the 1970s. "As the group became more known," Joe says, "*Country Music* magazine would tap me once in a while to write an on-the-road piece/diary for them. Those were my first published pieces. Then, technology really started to hit and in the late '80s, I bought my first laptop. That's also when we bought our first

Joe's writings include a history of The Oak Ridge Boys (right) as well as a collection of personal commentaries (below) and a tribute to his parents (below right).

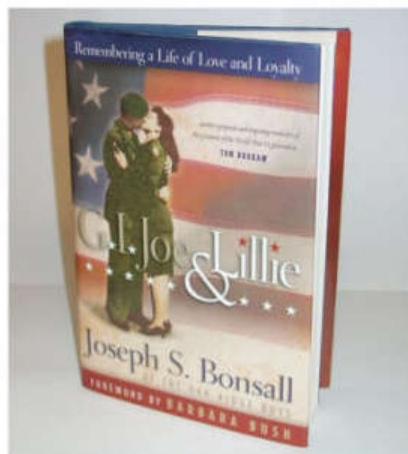
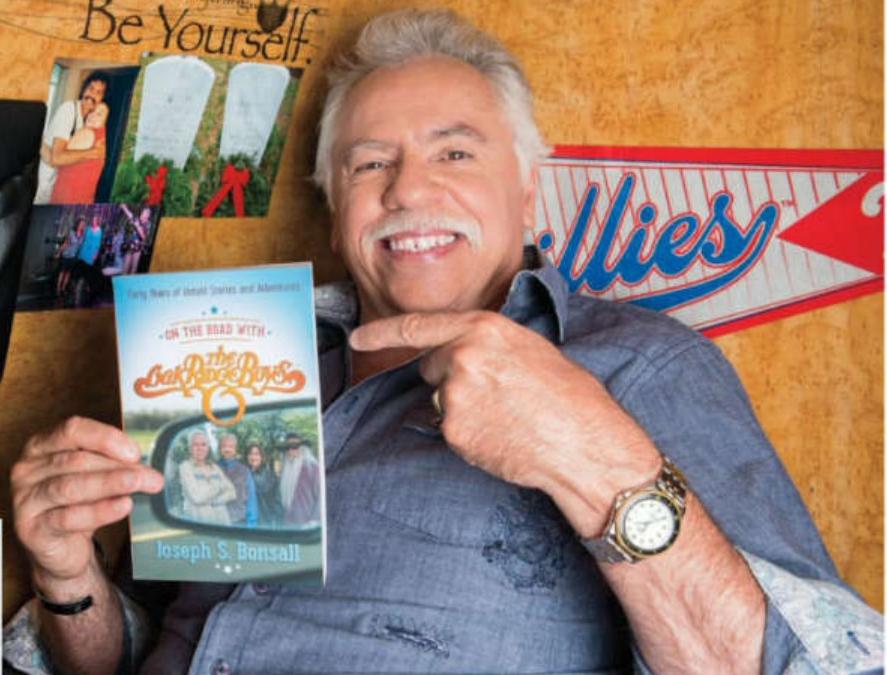


#### JOE BONSALL CONTINUED

cat, Molly. I loved that cat," he adds with a toothy laugh.

Joe made that cat into a star. He ended up writing a series of four popular books, sadly now out of print, based on Molly the Cat. And as famous felines go, perhaps only Garfield can claim a more lucrative audience share. "They really were a big deal," Joe says. "Those books helped me connect with children again. We would go on the road and schools would contact us wanting me to talk to one of their classes. That first Molly book really started me on the road to writing."

His work of greatest impact is easily the loving tribute to his parents *G.I. Joe & Lillie: Remembering a Life of Love and Loyalty*. The book,



published in 2003, is based on a song that Joe wrote about his mom and dad, who both served in World War II. "That has probably been my most popular book," Joe says. "I did my research and I wanted to write it from a third-person standpoint. If you look at the book closely, you'll see that it's dedicated to all four of The Oak Ridge Boys' mothers. That's how important they are to us."

This past year, Joe released his latest in the catalog, *On the Road With The Oak Ridge Boys: 40 Years of Untold Stories and Adventures*. It's basically what the title implies, a road history of the group dating back to their early days as a gospel group but focusing mainly on the act we know today. It's his second book on the award-winning group, following

on the heels of *An American Journey: A Look Back Over 30 Years With The Oak Ridge Boys*, published in 2004. That earlier memoir fairly well captured the Oaks' history, warts and all.

"I chronicled a lot of things that people didn't expect to read in that book," Joe smiles. "It talked about William Lee Golden leaving the group for a while [1987–1996] and Steve Sanders, who replaced him. I thought it was a pretty good read. The new one is out now and it's doing really well."

You can check out more of Joe's musings and writings on his personal website, [josephbonsall.com](http://josephbonsall.com). The site contains short essays on a variety of subjects, the American Legion and the famed Rotunda at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum among them. Appropriately, Joe includes a piece on the Oaks' election to the Country Music Hall of Fame, which takes place Oct. 25. "It is the biggest thing to ever happen to The Oak Ridge Boys," he writes.

Joe seconds that as he chats with NCW at The Oak Ridge Boys' office just outside of Nashville. "It's just phenomenal to me that The Oak Ridge Boys are going to be in the Hall of Fame," he says, leaning forward for emphasis. "It feels like all the hard work and the years of traveling we put in have been rewarded. We could not be more blessed." **NCW**

# Light & Sound!



Over  
1½ Feet  
High!

The golden-toned pendulum bears Kermit the Frog's lovable likeness while decorative hanging sandbag weights feature Gonzo and Animal

Shown much smaller than actual size of about 18 in. H.  
(including weights)  
Requires 2 "D" batteries and 1 "AA" battery (not included).  
Product subject to change.

[www.bradfordexchange.com/muppetsclock](http://www.bradfordexchange.com/muppetsclock)

# Illuminated sculptural *The Muppet Show* Cuckoo Clock

- Fully-sculpted, hand-painted clock features 12 beloved Muppet characters in place around the Muppet Theatre including Bunsen Honeydew and Beaker, Swedish Chef, Rowlf, Scooter and more!
- On the hour, you'll hear Statler and Waldorf crack jokes while Fozzie, Kermit, and Miss Piggy perform on stage!
- Brilliant LED lights illuminate the balcony and stage each hour and feature a separate on/off switch
- The clock face features The Muppet Show logo

**THE**  **MUPPETS**

Your satisfaction is  
guaranteed!

This one-of-its-kind timepiece is custom crafted in a limited edition and strong demand is expected. So act now to acquire the *The Muppet Show* Cuckoo Clock, payable in four monthly installments of \$49.99 each, for a total of \$199.95\*. Your purchase is risk-free, backed by our 365-day guarantee. Send no money now. Just mail the Reservation Application today!

©2015 BGE 01-19436-001-BIRWR

**RESERVATION APPLICATION**

**SEND NO MONEY NOW**

**THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE**  
HOME DECOR

9345 Milwaukee Avenue • Niles, IL 60714-1393

**YES.** Please reserve the *The Muppet Show* Cuckoo Clock for me as described in this announcement.  
Limit: one per order. **Please Respond Promptly**

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address

City

State

Zip

Email (optional)

**01-19436-001-E08191**

\*Plus \$23.99 shipping and service. Limited-edition presentation restricted to 295 crafting days. Please allow 8-10 weeks after initial payment for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

# CIRCULAR EMOTION

**Rainey Qualley makes her unforgettable debut on the Grand Ole Opry stage.**

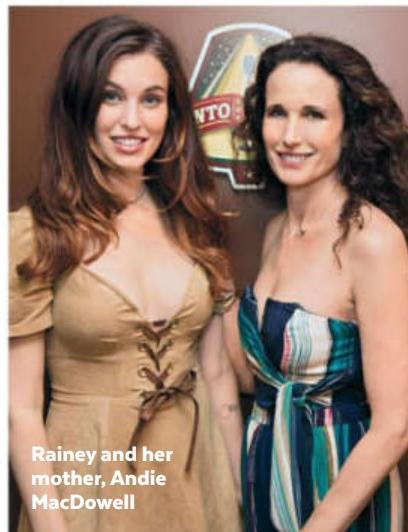
STORY BY GAYLE THOMPSON

Rainey Qualley is hours away from fulfilling a dream that has been percolating for years: that is, making her debut on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. If the singer is anxious about it, she's not letting it show during a visit at her home on the day of her Opry appearance (which took place Friday, Aug. 28). Instead, she appears calm and focused on the task at hand.

"I'm really excited, and also really nervous," Rainey says. "Right now, there's so much going on that I don't really have time to be nervous, but," she admits, "I started having stress dreams this morning at 5 a.m."

By mid-afternoon, Rainey arrives at the Grand Ole Opry for soundcheck and one final rehearsal. Giving the performance of a lifetime in front of mostly empty seats,

with her mother, actress Andie MacDowell watching backstage, Rainey sings as if the whole world is watching. "Mom gets more nervous than I do," Rainey explains, although outwardly, at least, her mother is all smiles. "This is fun!"



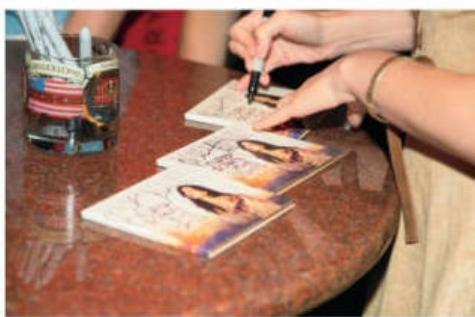
Rainey and her mother, Andie MacDowell

Andie exclaims, rubbing her daughter's back. "This is a celebration!"

At a reception prior to Rainey's performance—attended by several industry executives, friends and Nashville notables such as Ty Herndon and TV personality Suzanne Alexander—record company executive Russ Zavitzon takes a minute to honor the artist he signed to launch his newly formed label, Cingle Records. "I had a friend call me two years ago, and [say], 'I just heard the best singer I've ever heard in my life,'" Russ recounts. "I've heard that a lot in all the years I've been in this business. I think you're going to find out tonight that he was right. As we talk about how great a singer Rainey is, blessed with a beautiful instrument, even so, she's an incredible singer," says the record exec in praise of how skillfully



(Clockwise from right) Rainey poses with Opry announcer Eddie Stubbs; Rainey and her mother meet the Opry's Pete Fisher; radio hosts Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase greet Rainey backstage; a few CDs get Rainey's autograph; Rainey and band get ready for their big moment in the Opry circle.



Rainey uses her gift. "I've got to give credit to her parents," he adds, "because she's actually an even better human being. It's such a thrill to work with such a wonderful artist and a wonderful person."

"I couldn't be happier with the situation that I'm in," Rainey says of her association with the new label. "Russ, who is the label head and my manager and producer, had been wanting to start a label, or [was] toying with the idea for a while, but just hadn't met someone that he wanted to launch it with. I had been coming to Nashville to write for a while. Russ would set me up on appointments, and from the very first week there, we knew we had a special thing. So it just progressed really naturally. There's a little bit of pressure for me and for him, because starting a new label is a hard thing to do, but we're both

just really excited about everything that's going on. Everything is really starting to happen more quickly. I think more than anything, we're just eager."

After Grand Ole Opry member Steve Wariner introduces her to the stage, Rainey makes her official debut by belting out her songs "Me and Johnny Cash" and "Never Mine" to thunderous applause and an invitation to return from Opry vice president and general manager Pete Fisher. "There was so much adrenaline," Rainey says of the once-in-a-lifetime experience. "I remember moments of being onstage, but it's all an exciting blur. I was shaking. I think I wouldn't have been so nervous, but people kept asking, 'What does it mean to you? It's such an honor.' And of course, it is," Rainey affirms, "but when everyone is telling you it's such a

huge deal, it kind of gets in your head. So I definitely was very excited and nervous and overwhelmed, but once I got out there, everything else disappeared, and I was luckily able to just focus on singing, and try to get through it, really. One really nice thing is, Pete was very happy and very nice, and said I had an open invitation to sing whenever I want, so I told him that next time I'd be a lot less nervous."

Now, with the milestone performance behind her, Rainey can focus all her energies on finishing her new album as Cingle Records' flagship artist. Since the June release of her debut EP, *Turn Down the Lights*, Rainey has been putting the finishing touches on her first full-length record, which promises to be a somewhat eclectic affair. "With writing the rest of the album, we're trying to keep

*"I was very excited and nervous, but once I got out there everything else disappeared, and I was luckily able to just focus on singing, and try to get through it, really."*

RAINEY QUALLEY CONTINUED

a little bit of the variety." Variety shouldn't be difficult to achieve, as Rainey says there are "so many songs written at this point" and more in the works. "I'm still writing whenever I have time. Whenever I'm home, I'm doing writing sessions," says Rainey, who also does some solo writing when she's on the road, which is fairly often these days. Though she and her team are still narrowing down the song list for her debut album, she has a certain idea about the kind of mixture the final product is likely to contain. "Some of [the songs] definitely will have that traditional country song [feel], and some are going to be a little bit more pop/R&B, maybe. Some are a little more

(Below, from left)  
Rainey makes a bunch  
of new friends at her  
Opry debut, includ-  
ing Steve Wariner, Ty  
Herndon and Mel Tillis.



folky and bluegrass."

In between doing shows all across the country, Rainey is devoting most of her time to her new project but insists she isn't in a hurry to release it. Satisfied to take a wait-and-see approach in spite of her obvious excitement and the momentum she's been gaining with such

accomplishments as her Opry debut and stints opening for the likes of Willie Nelson and Loretta Lynn, Rainey explains her surprisingly laid-back philosophy for knowing when the album is complete. It will be done, she says, "just basically whenever we feel like we have enough kick-ass songs." **NCW**



photos by Chris Hollo/Hollo Photographics/Grand Ole Opry

# SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



**GET NASH  
COUNTRY  
WEEKLY  
DELIVERED  
RIGHT TO YOUR  
MAILBOX!**

If you reside in the U.S.,  
you can subscribe  
or renew by going to  
**CountryWeekly.com**  
or mailing in the  
form below

**YES! Please send me:**

- 1-year subscription for \$69.97**
  - 6-month subscription for \$59.97**
- (Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of your first issue.)
- Payment enclosed**  
(Check made payable to **Country Weekly** must be enclosed for order to be processed.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND THIS FORM TO:**

P.O. Box 37463  
Boone, IA  
50037-0463

**Credit Card Type (check one)**

- American Express
- Mastercard
- Visa
- Discover

**Credit Card Number:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Credit Card Expiration Date:**  
(MM/YY): \_\_\_\_\_

CYW VACA15

**NASH Country Weekly**  
COUNTRY FOR LIFE

# HERE COMES THE KING



**TO THE DELIGHT OF HIS FANS,  
GEORGE STRAIT RETURNS TO  
THE CHARTS AND THE STAGE.**

---

STORY BY BOB PAXMAN

---

**G**eorge Strait gave it to us straight a few years back. "I am not retiring," he told *Nash Country Weekly* in 2012. He was putting a halt to extensive touring, as George would later reveal at a press conference at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville. But as far as the "R" word? Not going to happen.

"Part of my career is coming to an end—the touring part. I'm not going to tour anymore after these two final years," George maintained, referring to his farewell series of shows, The Cowboy Rides Away Tour, which kicked off in 2013 and wrapped the following year. "I'm not saying that I'm never going to be onstage again. I'm just not going to tour."

The clinching statement was to follow. "Some things will come up that I will want to do," George declared. "There will be some special event that I may want to play."



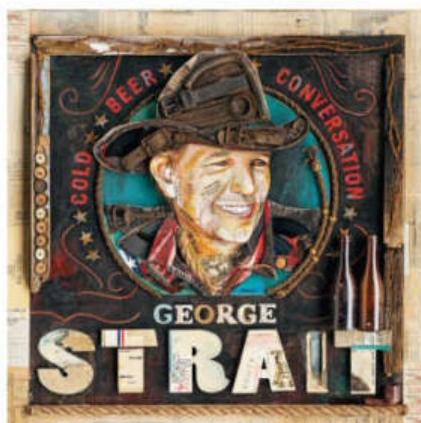


photo by Vanessa Gavelle/EB Media

## GEORGE STRAIT CONTINUED

And that time has come. At a late September press conference at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, George made the announcement that fans had been pining for ever since he completed his farewell tour. He would be playing two—now three—limited engagements at the brand-new Las Vegas Arena in 2016. George's shows are slated for April 22 and 23, Sept. 9 and 10 and now, because of overwhelming ticket demand, Dec. 2 and 3. More dates could be added as well.

George also dropped a nifty little bombshell when he announced that his new album, *Cold Beer Conversation*, would hit stores literally days later, on Sept. 25. There had been no advance word of the album release. And you must hand it to George and the team for keeping that a secret in this era of instant news and multiple delivery systems. *Cold Beer Conversation* represents the first release in the five-album record deal extension that George signed with his label in 2013.



So, we can now safely breathe the collective sigh of relief and declare, "The King is back!" But he's not back out of retirement—because he never announced a retirement in the first place.

George talked about his return to the stage, his new album, songwriting and other Strait-related topics with *Nash Country Weekly* at the MGM Grand on the day of his big media announcements.

George, sporting his trademark cowboy hat and jeans, fairly lights up at the mention of his Las Vegas stints. "It just kind of worked perfectly with what I said I wanted to do," George notes, flashing just a hint of a smile. "I wanted to have a few dates here and there, and when this came up, I said, 'This is what I was looking for.'"

Unlike his counterparts Shania Twain or Tim McGraw and Faith Hill, though, George would give a thumbs-down to a lengthy Las Vegas residency. That's just not, so to speak, in the cards. "I never wanted to do a residency here," George says. "Somebody asked me that a few

(From left) Lon Helton of *Country Aircheck*, George, AEG's Louis Messina and Rick Arpin of MGM Resorts International make the grand announcement.



years ago when we were announcing the last tour. A residency just would not work out for me."

At this point in his career, George prefers more stay-at-home time at the Texas ranch he shares with wife Norma. During the interim between his final tour and the new album, George saw plenty of the homestead. He also found time to whittle a few strokes off his golf game. But, ever the consummate pro, George kept his hands in music. You just can't keep an entertainer down for long.

"I finished the tour and put the live record [*The Cowboy Rides Away: Live From AT&T Stadium*] out," George says. "So, we got all that finished. Shortly after that, I went in the studio and made this new record. So it has been sitting around all this time. I've been wanting to have it out." And evidently, more than he ever let on. George's tone grows more excited as he recalls the waiting period for *Cold Beer Conversation*, his first album since 2013's *Love Is Everything*.

"I like to watch the charts and for 30 years I've been on there somewhere," George says. "And not seeing anything of mine was tough. That was killing me. So, it's nice to finally have this out there."

For the album, George culled tunes from some of Music Row's finest writers, including the prolific twosome of Brandy Clark and Shane McAnally ("Take Me to Texas"), Jamey Johnson ("Something Going Down") and the venerable Bill Anderson, who teamed with Jamey and Buddy Cannon on the lighthearted "Cheaper Than a Shrink." George also collaborated with his son Bubba and songwriter Dean Dillon, one of George's favorite go-to guys. Along with Keith Gattis, the triple-threat writing partners worked on the album's most warmly personal offering, "Everything I See," a tribute to George's dad, John, who died in June 2013 at age 91.

"That has the deepest meaning for me," says George, casting his eyes downward in memory. He points to a couple of lines—*And I accidentally dial your number almost every day / Wish I'd have thought to slip a phone in the pocket of your shirt*—that most unflinchingly describe his loss.

"You get so used to talking with someone for so long and all of a sudden, they're gone," George explains. "And those lyrics are so true. You know, something good would happen and I'd be like, 'I gotta call my dad.' And then you realize, you can't do that anymore. The idea started with the lines in the chorus about, *If somehow you could find that cloud with my stuff locked away*. We wrote from there." Taking a moment to reflect, George answers a natural follow-up question before it can actually be asked. "It's probably going to be a hard song for me to sing in my shows," he says solemnly. "It was definitely difficult to write. I'm so pleased with the way it came out. Dean Dillon put a great melody to it."

As George has recounted in the past, his songwriting passion was rekindled with the encouragement of his son. "He wanted to write with me," George noted a couple of



Kacey Musgraves and her band will open for George on his 2016 Las Vegas Arena dates.

# OPENING MATERIAL

**KACEY MUSGRAVES** gets every Texas gal's thrill with the leadoff spot for George Strait in Vegas.

"You grow up in Texas, and George Strait is the King," raves Lone Star State lady Kacey Musgraves, a native of Golden. Next year, Kacey will be part of the King's regal court, as she'll be opening for George on all of his Las Vegas Arena show dates. The first performances take place on April 22 and 23 at the new venue.

When Kacey got the invite from George, her head did a virtual cartwheel. "Obviously, I was super-thrilled when he asked," Kacey says. "And I'm still a huge fan. You really can't go wrong with any of his hits."

Kacey is nominated this year for three Country Music Association awards: Female Vocalist of the Year, Album of the Year for *Pageant Material* and Music Video of the Year for "Biscuits." The acclaimed singer/songwriter likely speaks for legions of female fans in her further praise of George.

"What I have always liked about him is that he stays true to who he is," Kacey says. "And I think he's just so cute, you know?"



# THE ART OF THE COVER

**Nashville illustrator and designer WAYNE BREZINKA creates a unique and striking album cover fit for a king.**



You've seen the typical, time-honored George Strait album cover, which generally boils down to a headshot of George wearing a smile and his trademark cowboy hat. However, for his latest project, *Cold Beer Conversation*, George went in an entirely different, and certainly out-of-the-box, direction.

The cover art is an illustration of George surrounded by distinct lettering, images of rope and beer bottle caps and a couple of beer bottles in the lower right-hand corner. The finely-detailed concept is the work of Nashville-based illustrator and designer Wayne Brezinka.

Designing album covers is nothing new for the Minnesota native, who has created a number of artistic projects for several stars, including the minimalist cover art for Dwight Yoakam's album *3 Pears*. But the chance to design a cover



for country music's all-time King represented an alternating thrill and challenge.

"The creative director at George's label reached out to me and said that she had a project for me and it involves George Strait," Wayne begins. "And I about fell out of my chair. They indicated, per his request, that he wanted something different. He wanted some kind of rendering. I sent some rough pencil sketches and had about four or five different concepts. I thought of Texas and George and his surroundings. And it was approved very quickly."

The temptation for beer images to dominate certainly reared its head. "I did think a little bit in that direction," Wayne says. "There are some little caps and beer bottles. That was one of the last things I added. A cattle whip kind of surrounds the circle. The rough pencil sketches were what they approved. That was basically the circle with the type and those decorative elements around the circle."

Wayne's cover ultimately got the most crucial seal of approval—from George himself. "I was really quite honored that the label gave me the green light," Wayne says in an upbeat tone. "But it's especially great that George loves it. I hope it'll turn some heads in the country realm."



**CHECK OUT MORE OF WAYNE BREZINKA'S WORK:**  
[brezinkadesign.com](http://brezinkadesign.com)  
[facebook.com/brezinkadesign](http://facebook.com/brezinkadesign)  
[twitter.com/waynebrezinka](http://twitter.com/waynebrezinka)





**"I HAVE DEFINITELY MISSED BEING AWAY FROM THE STAGE. I DID NOT MISS TOURING, JUST PERFORMING."**



#### GEORGE STRAIT CONTINUED

years ago. "My son got me back into it and I realized how much I missed it." Cut to the present day, and the fire continues to smolder. In addition to "Everything I See," George co-wrote "Let It Go," released as a single, and "It Takes All Kinds" for *Cold Beer Conversation*. George tells *Nash Country Weekly* that he's become more open to sharing his thoughts in song. There are subjects that he wants to speak about as he enters this new chapter in his career.

"I have things that I want to reflect on," he says. "But you never know where an idea is going to come from. I mean, you can wake up in the middle of the night and have an idea or melody in your head." At that, George, 63, laughs and takes a self-deprecating shot at his occasional lapses in memory. "The

thing is now, when an idea comes to you, you better get up and write it down," he smiles. "If I don't do that, I won't remember it. Of course, now it's easy to do that. When you have an idea or come across something, you can just pull out your phone and jot it down in your Notes. A lot of songs that I've written lately have started out that way."

Not that George has totally acquiesced to songwriting technology, though. He'll admit that he hasn't quite accepted the notion of the computer as a songwriting tool. "My son does that, puts his songs and melodies into the computer," George says. "When you write with him or Dean Dillon, that's how it's done. They don't have a pad and paper, which is what I like. They also Skype a lot and write that way. So, songwriting has changed in that respect. I just

can't bring myself to do it like that."

Fans can certainly revel in the notion that new songs exist, whether they've been penned in parchment or on a Smartphone app. And next year, you'll get your first glimpse of George on the concert stage since June 2014. No one's happier about George being back than the man himself.

"I have definitely missed being away from the stage," George says. "I did not miss touring, just performing." Outside of a private event that might come George's way, the only venue where you'll catch George in the near future is the new Las Vegas Arena, slated to be completed by early 2016. "I'm exclusive to them next year," George says. "So there won't be any other place you'll be able to see me except here."

Just one more reason to shout the old saying: viva Las Vegas! **NCW**

# EUROPEAN VACATION

## AN INTERNATIONAL TOUR STOP BECOMES A TREASURED MEMORY FOR CRAIG MORGAN AND WIFE KAREN.

While a lot of people dream of taking overseas vacations, it isn't all that unusual for country artists to have international stops as part of their world tours. Craig Morgan had certainly been to Europe on previous occasions, as had his wife, Karen Greer. But this summer was different for both of them, as Karen decided to tag along with her husband and his band as they performed at military installations and some personal dream destinations in France, Scotland, Germany and Norway. Karen thoughtfully documented the entire experience in her journal. The journey, and Karen's journal, began on July 22. Craig's latest single, the passionate "When I'm Gone," arrived in early September.

TAMMY RAGUSA

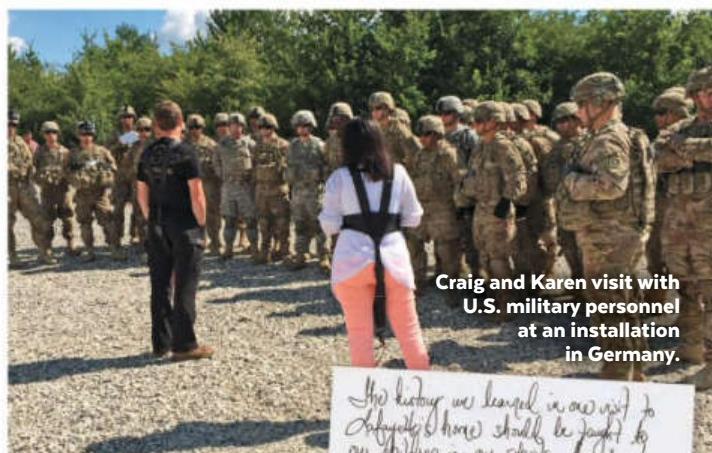
**NCW:** Why did you decide that this was the time to take a trip with Craig and the band?

**KAREN:** It was Europe. There are a lot of things here in the United States that I would love to see and I want to take the kids [to see], but Craig, being gone so much, we never really had the opportunity to do those things—you know, the Grand Canyon and D.C. and the West Coast. So, it is our plan that we will take our grown children and grandchildren on those trips around this country, [to] Philadelphia and Boston and New York City and Washington, D.C. But

this was Europe, and those tours . . . you just don't know if they'll come along again. Or, if they do, will they go back to France? And France is the one country I've always wanted to go visit, so that was it.

**CRAIG:** It wasn't about her being with me on this trip. The only reason she tolerated all the stuff that she did at the beginning was so that she could go to Scotland again. I bribed her.

**NCW:** This was a working vacation for Craig and the band, though. You visited and they performed at some military bases.



Craig and Karen visit with U.S. military personnel at an installation in Germany.

**KAREN:** Yes. And, bless his heart, he was a trooper. He knew I wanted to go and explore, and he did as well. He has been through a lot of those countries and stayed a little longer in others, but didn't get to see it like a tourist. He had just as much fun as I did, although it was just a little tiring when he had to

*The history we learned in our visit to Safely Home should be taught to our children in our schools. We stopped at a few businesses to purchase the items home, just to pursue the ownership. The ownership, between Safely Home and the United States was amazing to see. The social relationship between Washington and Germany parallels the relationship our countries have in the future especially during war. I feel always happy in Germany and because of the people there. I see myself returning. I met new, they are kind, polite people. Different cultures. They love and are loyal to their country as we are. I would love to come back some day and visit more of the beautiful country, with the people of the country we got to see and last. We have our passion and most importantly, our love for it in common.*



...and yes Wyeth, I had a gigantor, Krash - son - no T. vehicle

Tuesday July 1st

We were on the double-decker bus for 12 hours! all day! We left Gapenois, France 10am. Craig and I ate breakfast. Joey had awoken early to climb up to Saint Michel d' Aiguille (Only 100 steps). It was inspiring. It was beautiful to see. It was inspiring. It was beautiful to see my strong brother, near death in this Chapel that has always been there...there is no date it was built; time immemorial is how it is dated - in front of the abbey frame a wooden statue of Saint Michael from the late 11th century and says this. Guy (you see) Michael is the Abbot Saint Michael's. It is what they call Marcelline by the Director Chapelle before battle. I can only imagine what he was thinking, what he had planned over him in that moment. I do not ask.

(Above) Craig, Karen and the band in France; (below) Craig and Karen do a little sightseeing in Amsterdam.



go sing. They did 90-minute shows, so it wasn't just that he had to sing, it was back-to-back 90-minute shows and a couple of those were three nights in a row, so it was tough. But we definitely know where we want to go back, if we ever do get to go back. **CRAIG:** When I visit these military bases, it's easy for me to slip right back into that mode and feel like you're a part of it again. But the longer I'm away from it, the more I'm reminded what wonderful people they are. You go over and visit with them and you get this sense of pride that is overwhelmingly emotional. And not in just our nation, but in those men and women that are serving. There's an attachment you feel that is almost indescribable, and having served, I feel

like that attachment is even more, even thicker. I really believe that the people in the military, even those that were born after I got out, that are serving now, they take more pride in what I'm doing than I do. They're proud that one of their own is doing something like this. So that's why I try to wear their banner and try to represent them honorably, as honorably as I can and still be me.

**NCW:** Karen, this was your first time to tour with the band, and in your journal, you mention how much you learned about them.

### How was it for you, being one of the guys?

**KAREN:** I just love them. I don't even think they know how much I love those guys. You know, everybody thinks about the artist and I don't think they think about the other guys. They're out there, too, every day. The artist might be gone a few more days just because there's radio stuff that the band doesn't go to and there are just other things that go on, but they're still gone a lot. And they don't usually get recognized for their hard work. And they're just a great bunch of guys.



My bag, of course. This was not my idea of shopping since we have 12 weeks worth of clothes for 4 weeks and an absolutely wonderful clothing store that disappeared into the air. Literally. But I am with the band right? They are in the same boat. I should say some place)

-And of course Starbucks gets my coffee where ever it takes me (they are not -And of course we don't have time to have them make us another)

July 27th (I am, my bags were delayed for this States hotel on 5th Avenue in the Le Royal Monceau Raffles Hotel the Little Things)

Craig and I walked around the city of Gapenois with our little cases. We walked up the hill to the St. Michel Notre Dame de Joux, then to the Cathedral on the horizon. We visited Chateau de Chambord at sunset.

And Craig's brother is out there, too, so Joey and I got to have those little brother/sister looks about Craig—“Oh, gosh, here he goes.” So, that was neat to spend that time with Joey as well.

**NCW:** You mention that the airline lost your journal en route to France and that the band had to play in borrowed clothes without all their gear. Does that mean you got to shop in France?

**KAREN:** I was very excited. I thought, “Yes! I get to go shopping in France!” But the shops were closed on Sunday and Monday.

**NCW:** You didn't make it to Paris, but did you find a favorite spot in France?

**KAREN:** Mont Saint-Michel. It's at the top of a rock. It was



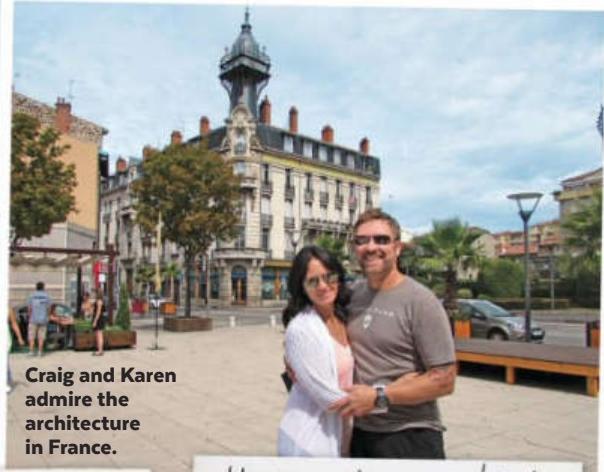
#### CRAIG MORGAN CONTINUED

started in 900, I believe. We finally get up to the top, it was me and Craig and Brian Tapley, his sound guy. And there's a statue of St. Michael, a wooden carved statue from, if I remember right, the 1100s, 1200s. And Craig walked over in this little alcove and he said, "I just felt something wash over me." We're not Catholic and he got real emotional. St. Michael is the patron saint of soldiers—especially paratroopers—and Craig was a paratrooper. I will never forget it. I stood there and saw his shoulders shudder and I just stopped, because I was walking toward him. He could feel it and I could see him feel it. It was amazing. I bought a rosary on-site at the old cathedral and the medallion in the middle is St. Michael.

**CRAIG:** There's one installation in Germany that we visited. The one that we played in the hangar, that was really cool for us because when I got in there and we started talking to some of the soldiers, we found out they hadn't had any entertainment in that installation in quite some time because it was kind of out of the way, so it was really special to hear these people, because they're so grateful.

#### NCW: How was the language barrier?

**KAREN:** We sat down at a restaurant for dinner one night. And we get the menu out and we're just looking at it, and I'm going, "OK, there's a picture of a fish here, so these dishes must be fish." And we're just laughing. The waiter knows no English and we know no French. So



**Craig and Karen admire the architecture in France.**

We pull up to the house at 1 pm. [Luke], the realty agent a few minutes later. It is overwhelming, the feeling of suspense. We walk around to the front door and etched into the pink limestone is the family crest, over the door. The Seacrest. Sofw by this. Exactly how we feel with Craig as head of our little clan. It is huge. Beautiful. Old. Color. Full. Alone. It feels like home. I hope this dream of ours to put at this place back in the family comes true. Places (gardens) and grass are weeds and pathways like something out of a magazine. But a little old garden, we can barely understand his accent so thick. I think stand amazed with Craig's ancestors in initials from the 1400s. It is perfect. In speechless.

July 23, 2015 We arrived in Germany and the guy checking passport looks at Craig and says, "Do you still think America is the greatest country in the world?"

It's all day today.

OK it is 10pm and it looks like its about 6am this is a beautiful place Norway. We got the hotel, had dinner, and great conversation about previous comment of airport. I am leaving a very lot about these guys my husband speaks so much time with, and I see why they love each other so much. They would a place to be. If I get all known and everyone falling at your feet. Just as rich, free love, they have feelings, they argue, they feel... strongly.

we couldn't eat, we couldn't order dinner. We were just dying laughing and the waiter is looking at us like we have three heads, then he starts laughing. Finally we say, "Wine, red." And he said, "Oui, oui!" and he was off. So, we sat there and drank a bottle of wine. And it's not like in America where they give you the free bread, it was just wine.

**NCW: You visited Scotland and found a home that belonged to your ancestors. Any chance of getting it back into the family?**

**CRAIG:** We actually went to see the realtor and we went real early because I wanted to go ahead and drive there, so when it came time to meet the realtor, I would know where I was going and not get lost. When we pulled up to the yard, lo and behold, a deer runs across the yard. My wife looked over at me and said, "I'm pretty sure that's a sign."

**KAREN:** That's what happened [in

Tennessee]. When we pulled up in 2002 or 2003 to buy this property, deer ran across the yard. Yes, so the exact same thing happened. And then, we get out and the realtor gets there and we go around to the front door and over the door, carved in the old limestone from the 1400s, was the family crest. So, I'm like, "We've got to do this!"

**CRAIG:** We'll see . . . if it makes sense for us to be able to go there. We're looking at retirement down the road; the day will come some day, and it might make sense to have a place like that where we can go spend a few months, then come back home and work a little bit, then go back.

#### NCW: Any plans to return?

**KAREN:** We've talked about that. The airline did crush my nativity scene that I bought at the chapel in France, so maybe we will go back. There's just so many places to go. **NCW**

# Wow! A Simple to Use Computer Designed Especially for Seniors!

*Easy to read. Easy to see. Easy to use. Just plug it in!*



*"I love this computer! It is easy to read and to use! I get photo updates my children and grandchildren all the time."*

– Janet F.

Have you ever said to yourself “I’d love to get a computer, if only I could figure out how to use it.” Well, you’re not alone. Computers were supposed to make our lives simpler, but they’ve gotten so complicated that they are not worth the trouble. With all of the “pointing and clicking” and “dragging and dropping” you’re lucky if you can figure out where you are. Plus, you are constantly worrying about viruses and freeze-ups. If this sounds familiar, we have great news for you. There is finally a computer that’s designed for simplicity and ease of use. It’s the WOW Computer, and it was designed with you in mind. This computer is easy-to-use, worry-free and literally puts

the world at your fingertips. From the moment you open the box, you’ll realize how different the WOW Computer is. The components are all connected; all you do is plug it into an outlet and your high-speed Internet connection. Then you’ll see the screen – it’s now 22 inches. This is a completely new touch screen system, without the cluttered look of the normal computer screen. The “buttons” on the screen are easy to see and easy to understand. All you do is touch one of them, from the Web, Email, Calendar to Games – you name it... and a new screen opens up. It’s so easy to use you won’t have to ask your children or grandchildren for help. Until now, the very people who could benefit most from E-mail and the Internet are the ones that have had the hardest time accessing it. Now, thanks to the WOW Computer, countless older Americans are discovering the wonderful world of the Internet every day. Isn’t it time

## NEW

**Now comes with...**

Larger 22-inch hi-resolution screen – easier to see

**16% more viewing area**

Simple navigation – so you never get lost

Intel® processor – lightning fast

Computer is in the monitor – No bulky tower

Advanced audio, Better speaker configuration – easier to hear

Text to Speech translation – it can even read your emails to you!

U.S. Based Customer Service

## FREE

**Automatic Software Updates**

you took part? Call now, and a patient, knowledgeable product expert will tell you how you can try it in your home for 30 days. If you are not totally satisfied, simply return it within 30 days for a refund of the product purchase price. Call today.

- Send & Receive Emails
- Have video chats with family and friends
- Surf the Internet:  
Get current weather and news
- Play games Online:  
Hundreds to choose from!

**Call now and find out how you can get the new WOW! Computer.**

Mention promotional code 101628  
for special introductory pricing.

**1-877-767-5666**





Colt Ford (left) joins Brantley onstage for "Dirt Road Anthem."

# RIVER STRONG

**BRANTLEY GILBERT and friends celebrate the lives of fallen servicemen at Chattanooga Unite.**

PHOTOS  
BY CARISSA  
RICCARDI

The nation was rocked to its core when five servicemen lost their lives in two separate drive-by shootings at military recruiting centers in Chattanooga, Tenn., on July 16. In the days that followed—while the country tried to return to a sense of normalcy—Brantley Gilbert was thinking of a way to help comfort the community, the families and even his own hurt. He called a local radio station and offered to give an intimate concert for the families, but realized that wasn't enough.

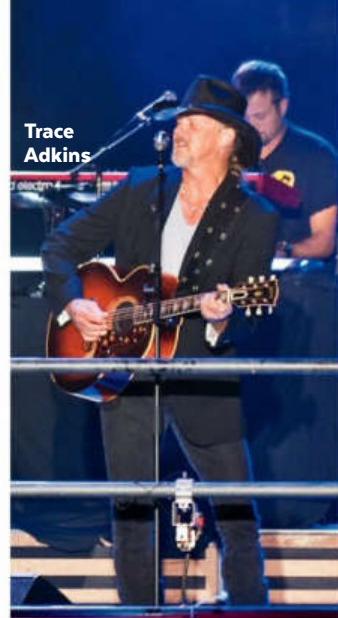
"I got to thinking about it and, really, the families and the community deserved a more grand gesture," he tells us on a call the day

after headlining the Chattanooga Unite: A Tribute on the River benefit. "We realized that the community was bleeding, too, it wasn't just the families. It was really all of us. And the minute we said we were going to blow it out and do something big, it was amazing. The city of Chattanooga came to the table with all kinds of ideas, and the radio station had ideas and it just turned into something bigger than we were even planning. It was absolutely amazing."

The original intimate, acoustic set morphed into a daylong event featuring a full-blown parade, a Blue Angels flyover and a concert hosted by Samuel L. Jackson

on Chattanooga's picturesque Riverbend Stage with performances from Brantley, Harry Connick Jr., Aaron Lewis, Trace Adkins, Jamey Johnson and Colt Ford. Brantley admits he was overwhelmed by the support from his peers and the 80,000-plus people in attendance, but it was time spent backstage with the families of the military personnel that touched him most.

"I talked to several of the widows and they all had a story about how my music was either a part of their relationship or what song meant something to them," he remembers. "One of them said that 'My Kinda Crazy,' a song I wrote for [my wife] Amber, was



(Left) A parade before the concert honors the fallen heroes; (below) Brantley meets with the families of the deceased servicemen and helps present a donation to the National Compassion Fund.



## IN MEMORIAM

Nash Country Weekly honors the fallen soldiers from the July 16 shooting in Chattanooga and extends condolences to all affected families.

**Lance Cpl.  
Squire  
"Skip" Wells**

**Gunnery Sgt.  
Thomas J.  
Sullivan**

**U.S. Navy  
Petty Officer  
Second Class  
Randall Smith**

**Sgt.  
Carson  
Holmquist**

**Staff Sgt.  
David Wyatt**



their song. They danced to it at their wedding. She talked to Amber for 30 minutes. I was so proud of Amber. The whole day was overwhelming, emotionally, but there were so many good things that came out of it. It blew my mind."

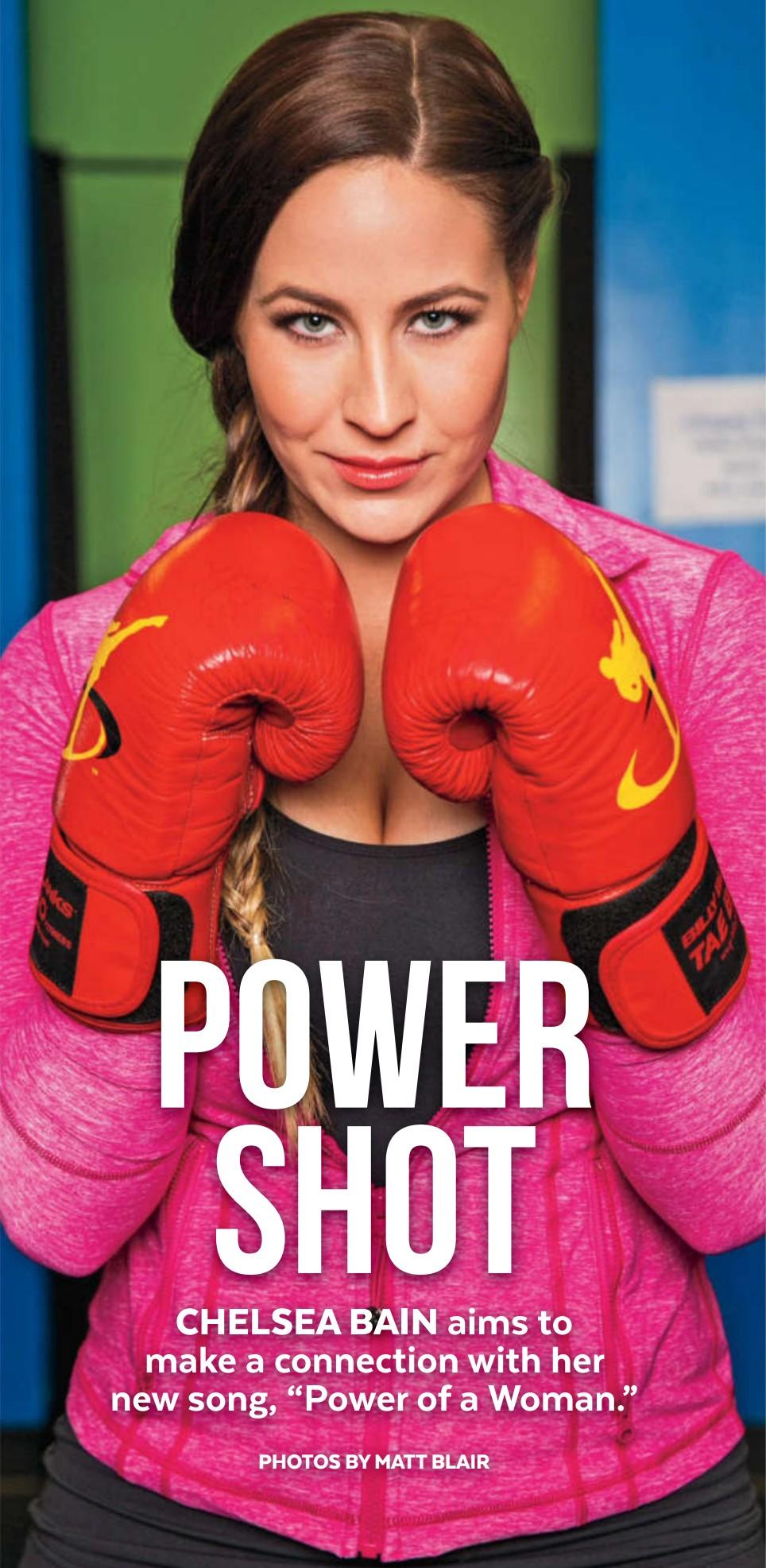
Brantley admits he held nothing back during his performance and was concerned that those in attendance may have misunderstood his

high-energy show. He says, "When I took the stage, I played a couple of songs and then I stopped and I told them, 'Look, I know there are a lot of you that are probably wondering why we're playing rocking songs at an event like this. To be honest with you, I know part of the grieving process is to grieve and mourn, but there's also part of the process to celebrate the lives and celebrate

the legacies of these gentlemen, and that's what we're doing. We can't bring the families' sons and brothers and husbands back, but maybe we can give them a smile."

Chattanooga Unite: A Tribute on the River was a free concert; however, donations from the event exceeded \$200,000, with proceeds going to The National Compassion Fund.

TAMMY RAGUSA



# POWER SHOT

**CHELSEA BAIN** aims to make a connection with her new song, “Power of a Woman.”

PHOTOS BY MATT BLAIR

## COUNTRY ROCKER CHELSEA BAIN

feels right at home when she's on-stage pumping up a crowd before a NASCAR event or opening for Big & Rich. But she's also not afraid to step out of her comfort zone to try something new, which is why she recently released “Power of a Woman,” an empowering ballad unlike anything from her past catalogue of work. It's also why she's at Team Tae Bo Fitness in Franklin, Tenn.,

### TALE OF THE TAPE

**CHELSEA BAIN**

**AGE**  
26

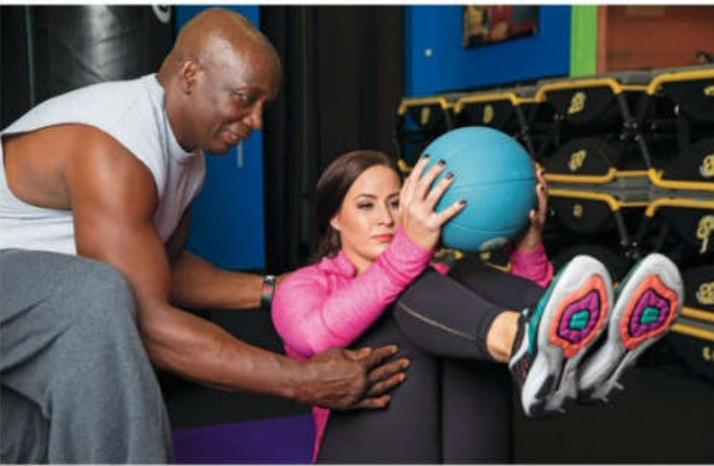
**HOMETOWN**  
Phoenix

**SINGLE**  
“Power of a Woman”

on an early Monday morning with fitness guru Billy Blanks, creator of the Tae Bo exercise system. Female empowerment isn't a new subject, but it sure has been in the headlines lately. From the Saladgate debacle to Maddie & Tae flipping the script on bro country with their anthem to resilience, “Girl in a Country Song,” women are roaring. Perhaps no one is roaring louder than mixed martial artist and actress Ronda Rousey, who has been driving home the point that it's perfectly acceptable to be a beautiful, speak-your-mind, ass-kicking woman.

“I get it, women are supposed to be feminine,” says Chelsea as she tries on her first pair of boxing gloves, “but sometimes being feminine and having fun don't go hand in hand. I mean, how badass is Ronda Rousey? She's like my new hero.”

With that statement, Chelsea smacks her gloves together and does her best Rocky Balboa impression, shuffling from side to side with her arms extended over her head. She's not ready for Apollo Creed just yet, but she is excited about getting her first Tae Bo lesson from the aforementioned Billy Blanks, who is in town to lead two seminars at his affiliated gym. As more than 100 Tae Bo enthusiasts, mostly 30-something women, pack the class, there's a concentrated air of empowerment in the room, which is a nice parallel to Chelsea's new tune.



"Power of a Woman" is like everything I want to portray," says Chelsea, who is now getting a few one-on-one pointers from Billy before the class begins. "The video [in which Chelsea stars] is the story of a military wife who finds her husband's deployment letter and realizes he has to go. In these situations, the wives and girlfriends are left at home, and I wanted to portray being strong—both for him and me. It's just as hard for him to leave his family as it is for me. It seemed like a great way to represent the song."

As the roomful of pugilistic hopefuls continue to limber up for the ensuing class, Chelsea takes her place among the masses. She's a little nervous about the unknown, but she's also pumped about the challenge that lies ahead: a two-hour cardio burnout.

"I'm really excited because I've never done any sort of boxing or Tae Bo, so it's a lot of fun to have you guys here," she says. "I'm definitely the kind of person who likes to punch and kick real hard. I'm honestly like a kid today, really excited



## BLANKS' SLATE

"I go all over the country and world giving seminars, and it's just so important to be mindful when you work out," says Tae Bo creator Billy Blanks. "A lot of people go through the motions without thinking. It's not all about the body. You need to be cognizant—with your mind—of the motions your body is doing. It's really about connecting."



for this and to have my new song out there. To me, it's about all women—young, old, middle age, me, my mom, my cousins. I love the idea of every woman feeling powerful and special. I love the way the song says that."

And with that, Billy takes the stage and the class begins to kick and punch its way to better health. After a few figure-it-out minutes, Chelsea gets her footwork down and starts slugging away in fine form. And if Ronda Rousey were here, she'd probably smile at that sight.

JIM CASEY

## *BEHIND THE SONG*





# GOING, GOING, GOES

## "ANYTHING GOES"

FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

**WRITERS:** Felix McTeigue, Chris Tompkins, Craig Wiseman



Chris Tompkins



Craig Wiseman

## FABULOUS FELIX

Some of **FELIX McTEIGUE**'s other cuts include the title track of Dallas Smith's Canadian Top 20 album *Jumped Right In* and Heidi Newfield's "Wreck You," from her 2008 debut solo album, *What Am I Waiting For.*

You don't have to live in Nashville to be a hit songwriter on the country charts. Just ask Felix McTeigue. The Vermont native only comes to Music City a handful of times throughout the year, but he makes the most of those trips by writing with friends like seasoned songwriter Chris Tompkins. "I'm kind of an outsider in some ways, so it's cool that they make enough time for me," says Felix.

Chris looks forward to making room in his schedule to write with Felix because of the outside influence he brings into the writing room. "When Felix and I settle on an idea, we enjoy the process of keeping it from sounding too much like other songs," says Chris. "We like to remove words and insert new twists on lines that you've already heard, basically."

While spitballing ideas, Chris came up with a line he thought was compelling: *Victoria's Secret ain't a secret no more*. The two songwriters began to flesh out the idea and continued to chip away at the song all day. When the session was over, they had a solid chorus and a few possible verses. Knowing that Felix's

availability in town was limited, Chris made some adjustments in his schedule for the following day, carving out a slice of time for him and Felix to complete the song and, in the process, adding a wild card to the deck. "I thought it was a really cool song, so I knew if we were going to finish it that I would have to see if my co-writer the following day would like to join us," recalls Chris.

That co-writer happened to be Craig Wiseman, who shares office space with Chris at his company, Big Loud Shirt. "Craig is just so great about putting words together, so I was thrilled that he wanted to be a part of this song," says Felix. "He played a big role in making sure every word made sense, but that it was said in a little bit of a different way that's been done before."

After listening to what Felix and Chris had started, Craig knew he was on board. "I loved the hook that they had," says Craig, who was inducted into the Nashville Songwriter Hall of Fame earlier this year. "It was interesting and it was different. It was a classic Chris Tompkins track."

The three writers finished "Anything Goes" and began the process of pitching it around town. While several artists liked the song, Florida Georgia Line was the first to put it on hold. The duo cut the song for their sophomore album and ultimately made it the title track, which would later become the album's fourth single.

"When I heard the final track, I thought FGL just took it way north, through the finish line and beyond," says Felix. "They really worked hard on that whole record, and I am so happy that I could have a part of the project with this song."

ALANNA CONAWAY

# CHARTS

The week of Oct. 17, 2015

## TOP 25 BILLBOARD ALBUMS

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	-	CASS COUNTY DON HENLEY
2	-	COLD BEER CONVERSATION GEORGE STRAIT
3	-	TANGLED UP THOMAS RHETT
4	1	KILL THE LIGHTS LUKE BRYAN
5	6	MONTEVALLO SAM HUNT
6	2	SOUTHERN DRAWL ALABAMA
7	5	ILLINOIS BRETT ELDREDGE
8	8	JEKYLL + HYDE ZAC BROWN BAND
9	7	THE OUTSIDERS ERIC CHURCH
10	9	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
11	10	PAIN KILLER LITTLE BIG TOWN
12	11	START HERE MADDIE & TAE
13	-	ON PURPOSE CLINT BLACK
14	13	ANGELS AND ALCOHOL ALAN JACKSON
15	12	OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT JASON ALDEAN
16	3	TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS
17	14	JUST AS I AM BRANTLEY GILBERT
18	16	PAGEANT MATERIAL KACEY MUSGRAVES
19	15	NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL COUNTRY, VOLUME 8 • VARIOUS ARTISTS
20	19	IGNITE THE NIGHT CHASE RICE
21	18	TRAVELLER CHRIS STAPLETON
22	17	WILD ONES KIP MOORE
23	27	DJANGO AND JIMMIE WILLIE NELSON & MERLE HAGGARD
24	4	COUNTRY EVOLUTION HOME FREE
25	21	SOMETHING MORE THAN FREE JASON ISBELL

## TOP 25 BILLBOARD SINGLES

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	1	SAVE IT FOR A RAINY DAY KENNY CHESNEY
2	3	LOSE MY MIND BRETT ELDREDGE
3	4	STRIP IT DOWN LUKE BRYAN
4	2	JOHN COUGAR, JOHN DEERE, JOHN 3:16 • KEITH URBAN
5	5	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
6	8	GONNA WANNA TONIGHT CHASE RICE
7	6	BREAK UP WITH HIM OLD DOMINION
8	10	LET ME SEE YA GIRL COLE SWINDELL
9	7	SMOKE BREAK CARRIE UNDERWOOD
10	11	FLY MADDIE & TAE
11	12	NOTHIN' LIKE YOU DAN + SHAY
12	13	GONNA BLAKE SHELTON
13	14	I'M COMIN' OVER CHRIS YOUNG
14	15	GONNA KNOW WE WERE HERE JASON ALDEAN
15	16	TOP OF THE WORLD TIM McGRAW
16	17	BURNING HOUSE CAM
17	19	STAY A LITTLE LONGER BROTHERS OSBORNE
18	21	RUN AWAY WITH YOU BIG & RICH
19	20	ALREADY CALLIN' YOU MINE PARMALEE
20	22	DIBS KELSEA BALLERINI
21	23	I LOVE THIS LIFE LOCASH
22	24	I GOT THE BOY JANA KRAMER
23	25	21 HUNTER HAYES
24	26	COUNTRY NATION BRAD PAISLEY
25	28	WE WENT RANDY Houser

## TOP 10 AMERICANA AIRPLAY

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	1	SOMETHING MORE THAN FREE JASON ISBELL
2	2	SERVANT OF LOVE PATTY GRIFFIN
3	3	LOST TIME DAVE ALVIN & PHIL ALVIN
4	4	PAGEANT MATERIAL KACEY MUSGRAVES
5	13	PANHANDLE RAMBLER JOE ELY
6	8	TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS
7	10	GATES OF GOLD LOS LOBOS
8	6	THE BLADE ASHLEY MONROE
9	5	WATKINS FAMILY HOUR WATKINS FAMILY HOUR
10	16	SOUTH BROADWAY ATHLETIC CLUB BOTTLE ROCKETS

SOURCE: AMERICANA AIRPLAY CHART

## rdio TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY SONGS\*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	ANTHEM THOMAS RHETT
2	STRIP IT DOWN LUKE BRYAN
3	RUNNIN' OUTTA MOONLIGHT RANDY Houser
4	BURNING HOUSE CAM
5	TAKE YOUR TIME SAM HUNT

## TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY/AMERICANA/SOUTHERN ALBUMS\*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	TANGLED UP THOMAS RHETT
2	CASS COUNTY DON HENLEY
3	NUMBER ONES KENNY ROGERS
4	SERVANT OF LOVE PATTY GRIFFIN
5	ILLINOIS BRETT ELDREDGE

\*DATA FROM OCT. 5, 2015

© 2015, BILLBOARD/65 GLOBAL MEDIA/NIELSEN ENTERTAINMENT

# Star Light, Star Bright

A  
*So Truly Real®*  
Doll Exclusive

Sweetly  
sculpted and  
hand-painted

★  
Weighted to feel  
so real in your arms

★  
Soft *RealTouch®*  
vinyl skin

This doll is about 17" long and poseable.  
She is not a toy, but a fine collectible.

## *So lifelike, she's a little wish come true!*

All snug in her pajamas, this baby girl's face lights up with joy as you begin the bedtime ritual you both love. You softly sing the nursery rhyme, "Star light...star bright..." as you kiss one plump finger after the other. It won't be long at all until her eyes grow heavy and she's fast asleep.

Introducing *Star Light, Star Bright*, a So Truly Real® treasure brought to life through the unique talents of Master Doll Artist Sherry Rawn. Crafted of *RealTouch®* vinyl to capture every lifelike detail, this tiny charmer is 17 lovable inches long and *weighted* to feel just like a baby in your arms. She wears a pink-and-white sleeper adorned with the moon and stars to put a twinkle in your eye!

*Make her your very own—for  
a limited time*

Sherry Rawn's artist dolls sell well into the hundreds. But *Star Light, Star Bright* can be yours for \$129.99\*, payable in five easy installments of \$25.99. She won't last long—order today!

[www.ashtondrake.com/starbright](http://www.ashtondrake.com/starbright)

©2015 ADG, 9200 N. Maryland Ave., Niles, IL 60714-1397

03-02205-001-BI



PLEASE  
RESPOND  
PROMPTLY



9200 North Maryland Ave. Niles, Illinois 60714-1397

YES! Please reserve the *Star Light, Star Bright* So Truly Real® doll for me as described in this announcement.

Name (please print clearly) \_\_\_\_\_ (Telephone) \_\_\_\_\_

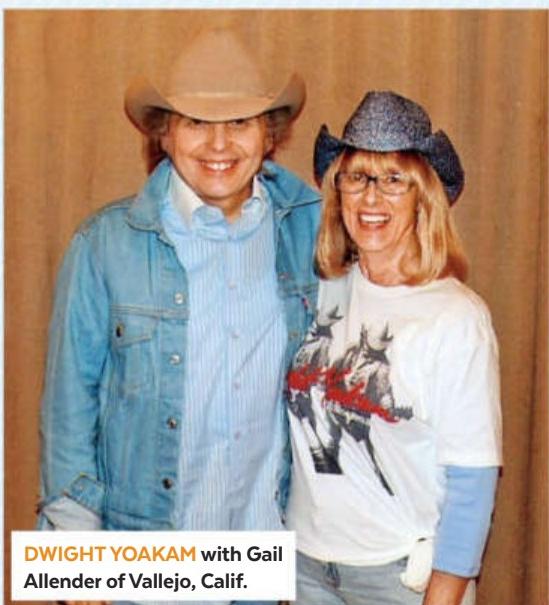
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**03-02205-001-D08101**

\*Plus a total of \$14.99 shipping and service charges. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for shipment after initial payment is received. All orders are subject to acceptance.



**WANT YOUR FAN PHOTO PUBLISHED IN NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY?**

Send photos to Nash Flash, Nash Country Weekly, 506 2nd Avenue South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210, or submit online (no duplicate submissions, please) at [countryweekly.com/fanphotos](http://countryweekly.com/fanphotos). Be sure to include the name, hometown and state of each person pictured. Publication is not guaranteed; photos cannot be returned.



Try a little  
**TENDERNESS.**

and save 77% on world-famous Omaha Steaks®



## The Family Gourmet Feast

- 2 (5 oz.) Filet Mignons
- 2 (5 oz.) Top Sirloins
- 2 (4 oz.) Boneless Pork Chops
- 4 Boneless Chicken Breasts (1 lb. pkg.)
- 4 (4 oz.) Omaha Steaks Burgers
- 4 (3 oz.) Kielbasa Sausages
- 15 oz. pkg. All-Beef Meatballs
- 4 Potatoes au Gratin
- 4 Caramel Apple Tartlets
- Omaha Steaks Seasoning Packet

40332YGB

Reg. \$219.91 | Now Only **\$49<sup>99</sup>**

Plus get 4 more  
Kielbasa Sausages  
**FREE**



ORDER  
NOW &  
**SAVE  
77%**

1-800-811-7832 ask for 40332YGB | [www.OmahaSteaks.com/kls53](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/kls53)

Limit 1 Family Gourmet Feast per shipment at this price. Your 4 free sausages will be sent to each shipping address that includes #40332. Limit of 1 free box of 4 (3 oz.) Kielbasa Sausages per shipment. Standard S&H will be added per address. Flat rate shipping and reward cards and codes cannot be used with this offer. Not valid with other offers. This offer is not available at Omaha Steaks retail locations. Expires 11/30/15. ©2015 OCG | Omaha Steaks, Inc.

# WORDSEARCH

Compiled by John Reiman

## DAN + SHAY

X Z L Y R T A T T O O Y O U R N A M E P  
M W A R N E R B R O S N A S H V I L L E  
T L W H E R E I T A L L B E G A N L S T  
Y E L R O G Y E L H S A N E A H I M A C  
K E L S E A B A L L E R I N I R U W W H  
R U O T Y Z A R C F O D N I K T H G I R  
H O R N R E I Z A R C S E M I T N E T I  
S Y D E L B I S I V N I T O N E R E W S  
R E N O T R O Y N N A D E N Y C S Y E D  
E K A R B G N I K R A P E O B H H L X E  
Y I P K S E Y A H R E T N U H I O O F S  
M L O S H A Y M O O N E Y D G E W P O T  
S N R E S C U E D O G S O L E F Y L R E  
N I D V N G I S S U L P U A O A O K D F  
A H P H T I M S N A A N A C H N U V P A  
D T O B U C A N T S A Y N O S D O U A N  
N O T L E H S E K A L B D V G J F O F O  
Q N S N A T U R A L D A M A R O F N C B  
W H A T Y O U D O T O M E M Q Y J A C E  
G S K C I R D N E H T T O C S A Q H Y Y



Find the words, titles and phrases in this wordsearch challenge submitted by **MEAGAN LAMPERHE** of Westerly, R.I.

NOTE—they may appear vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backward or forward. Good luck!

**Get your Puzzle Published and**

**WE WILL PAY YOU**

**\$25**

We need your submissions more than ever! Make up a list of words and phrases about a particular star, topic or theme related to country music. Email a list and recent, clear photo of yourself to [letters@countryweekly.com](mailto:letters@countryweekly.com) and type "Wordsearch" in the subject line or mail to **NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY Wordsearch, 506 2nd Ave. South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210.**

If we choose your list to make a Wordsearch puzzle, we'll publish your photo and pay you \$25!

Sorry, but submitted photos cannot be returned.

... RIGHT KIND OF CRAZY TOUR  
ASHLEY GORLEY  
BLAKE SHELTON  
CAM  
CAN'T SAY NO  
CANAAN SMITH  
CHIEF AND JOY  
CHRIS DeSTEFANO  
CMA VOCAL DUO NOMINEES  
DAN SMYERS

DANNY ORTON  
HUNTER HAYES  
KELSEA BALLERINI  
NATURAL DAM, AR  
NINETEEN YOU AND ME  
NOTHIN' LIKE YOU  
PARKING BRAKE  
PLUS SIGN  
RESCUE DOGS  
SCOTT HENDRICKS

SHAY MOONEY  
SHOW YOU OFF  
STOP DROP AND ROLL  
TATTOO (YOUR NAME)  
TEN TIMES CRAZIER  
WARNER BROS. NASHVILLE  
WE'RE NOT INVISIBLE  
WEXFORD, PA  
WHAT YOU DO TO ME  
WHERE IT ALL BEGAN



# "Christmas at Graceland" by Thomas Kinkade

*Genuine canvas print creates the beauty of the original artist's painting*

*Marvel at the distinctive illumination of a Thomas Kinkade painting as never before with more than 55 strategically-placed lights*

*Hand-applied glitter sparkles on Graceland's rooftop, lawn and tree tops*

*Handsome cherry-toned frame includes a brass title plaque*

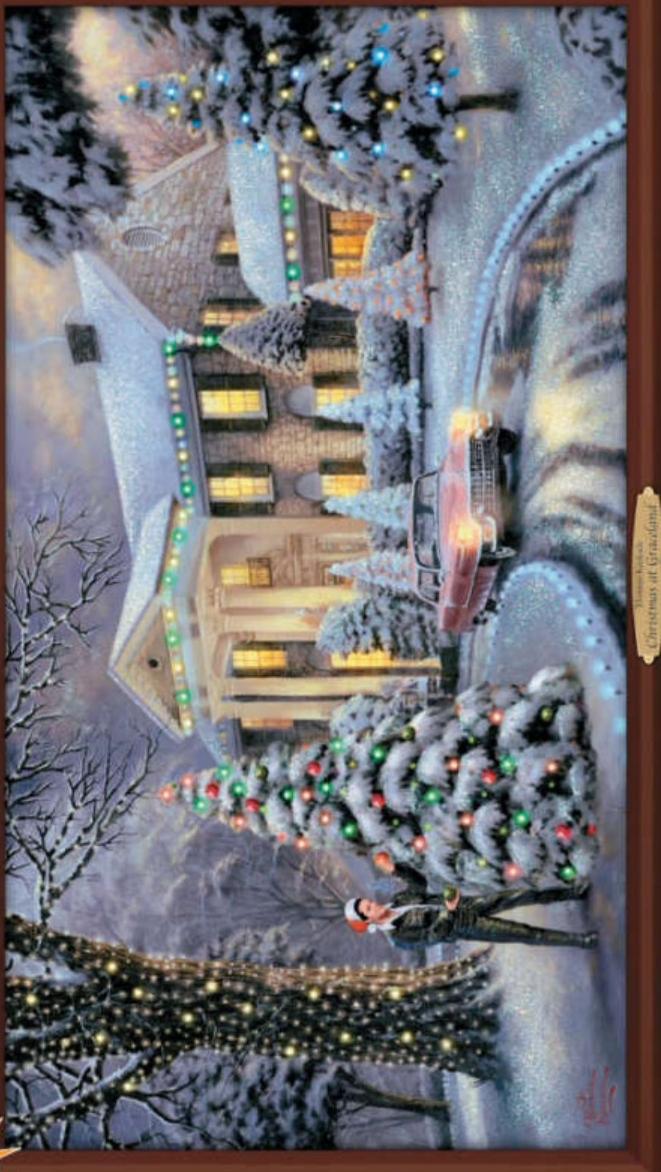
**SEND NO MONEY NOW**

**BRADFORD THE EXCHANGE**

9345 Milwaukee Avenue • Niles, IL 60714-1393  
**YES.** Please reserve the Thomas Kinkade "Christmas in Graceland" illuminated Canvas Print for me as described in this announcement. **Please Respond Promptly**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mrs. Mr. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ Name (Please Print Clearly)  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*Plus \$14.99 shipping and service. Limited-edition presentation restricted to 120 crafting days. Please allow 4-8 weeks after initial payment for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.



## Bring the Lights of Graceland Home with a Genuine Illuminated Canvas Print



The lights on the Christmas trees change color, thanks to the brilliance of fiber-optic lighting.

©EPE, Reg. U.S. Pat. & TM. Off.  
 ©2014 Thomas Kinkade  
 ©2014 BGE 01-19098-001-BI  
[www.bradfordexchange.com/19098](http://www.bradfordexchange.com/19098)

Now, for the first time ever, the King of Rock 'n Roll® takes center stage in a beloved portrait from famed artist Thomas Kinkade that authentically recreates the lights of Graceland in an artist's canvas print that illuminates from within! Strong demand is anticipated, so act now to acquire yours at the issue price of only \$99.99\*, payable in three installments of \$33.33, the first due before shipment, and backed by our 365-day money-back guarantee. Send no money now. Just complete and mail the Reservation Application today.

Thomas Kinkade's original portrait of Graceland not only captured the actual lighted display of Elvis' home at Christmas, it also caught the attention and adoration of his many fans. It features 40 color-changing lights on the trees, 14 golden fiber optics on the tree trunk, two golden fiber optics in the headlights, and golden lights that illuminate the windows. This spectacular edition has

**RESERVATION APPLICATION**

**01-19098-001-E08102**



NASH Country Weekly Magazine | 506 2nd Ave. South, Suite 200 | Nashville, TN 37210 | (615) 259-1111

**Editor in Chief**  
**LISA KONICKI**

**Managing Editor**  
Jon Freeman

**Deputy Editor**  
Jim Casey

**Senior Writers**  
Bob Paxman, Tammy Ragusa

**Art Director**  
Chris Allen

**Graphic Designer**  
Martha Ressler

**Production Manager**  
Will Branham

**Photo Editor**  
Elissa C. Newland

**Assistant Photo Editor**  
Carissa Riccardi

**Web Producer/Designer**  
Jason Simanek

**Copy Editors**  
John Reiman,  
Steve Morley

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Publisher  
Jeff Meltesen

For all advertising inquiries contact  
615-727-6952  
jmeltesen@countryweekly.com

**Cumulus Media, Inc.**  
3280 Peachtree Road, NW,  
Suite 2300  
Atlanta, GA 30305

**Chairman & Chief Executive Officer**  
Lew Dickey

**Executive Vice President**  
John Dickey

**Chief Financial Officer**  
JP Hannan

**VP/Brand Partnerships**  
Leslie Caraccilo

**Director of Brand Integration**  
and Strategic Partnerships  
Ashley Tate

**FOR SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE, PLEASE CALL (877) 566-5832.**

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (ALL PERIODICALS PUBLICATIONS EXCEPT REQUESTER PUBLICATIONS)**

1. PUBLICATION TITLE: NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY. 2. PUBLICATION NUMBER: 1074-3235. 3. FILING DATE: 42277. 4. ISSUE FREQUENCY: WEEKLY. 5. NUMBER OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 52. 6. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: 110. 7. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 506 2ND AVE S, SUITE 200 NASHVILLE, TN 37210. CONTACT PERSON: STEVEN JACOBS. TELEPHONE 212-339-1907 8. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF HEADQUARTERS OR GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICE OF PUBLISHER: NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY, 506 2ND AVE S, SUITE 200, NASHVILLE, TN 37210. 9. FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR AND MANAGING EDITOR: PUBLISHER: JEFF MELTESEN, NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY, 506 2ND AVE S, SUITE 200, NASHVILLE, TN 37210. EDITOR: LISA KONICKI, NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY, 506 2ND AVE S, SUITE 200, NASHVILLE, TN 37210. MANAGING EDITOR: JON FREEMAN, NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY, 506 2ND AVE S, SUITE 200, NASHVILLE, TN 37210. 10. OWNER: NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY LLC, 506 2ND AVE S, SUITE 200, NASHVILLE, TN 37210. 11. KNOWN BONDHOLDERS, MORTGAGEES AND OTHER SECURITY HOLDERS OWNING OR HOLDING 1 PERCENT OR MORE OF TOTAL AMOUNT OF BONDS, MORTGAGES, OR OTHER SECURITIES: NONE. 12. TAX STATUS HAS NOT CHANGED DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS. 13. PUBLICATION TITLE: NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY. 14. ISSUE DATE FOR CIRCULATION DATA BELOW: 42247. 15. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION AVERAGE (A) TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES (NET PRESS RUN): AVERAGE NO. COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS: 170977.5094; NO. COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE PUBLISHED NEAREST TO FILING DATE: 179701. (B) PAID CIRCULATION (1) MAILED OUTSIDE-COUNTY PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS STATED ON PS FORM 3541: (I) 6,021; (II) 12067. (2) MAILED IN-COUNTY PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS STATED ON PS FORM 3541: (I) 0; (II) 0. (3) PAID DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THEAILS INCLUDING SALES THROUGH DEALERS AND CARRIERS, STREET VENDORS, COUNTER SALES, AND OTHER PAID DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE USPS: (I) 25548; (II) 21001. (4) PAID DISTRIBUTION BY OTHER CLASSES OF MAIL THROUGH THE USPS (E.G. FIRST-CLASS MAIL): 0; 0. (C) TOTAL PAID DISTRIBUTION [SUM OF 15B. (1), (2), (3), AND (4)]: (I) 31569; (II) 33068. (D) FREE DISTRIBUTION BY MAIL (SAMPLES, COMPLIMENTARY, AND OTHER FREE): (1) FREE OR NOMINAL RATE OUTSIDE-COUNTY COPIES INCLUDED ON PS FORM 3541: (I) 444.0599312; (II) 531 (2) FREE OR NOMINAL IN-COUNTY COPIES INCLUDED ON PS FORM 3541: (I) 0; (2) 0. (3) FREE OR NOMINAL RATE COPIES MAILED AT OTHER CLASSES THROUGH THE USPS (E.G. FIRST-CLASS MAIL): (I) 0; (II) 0. (4) FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE MAIL (CARRIERS OR OTHER MEANS): (I) 651.0188679; (II) 419. (E) TOTAL FREE OR NOMINAL RATE DISTRIBUTION (SUM OF 15D. (1), (2), (3) AND (4)): (I) 1096.078799; (II) 950. (F) TOTAL DISTRIBUTION (SUM OF 15C. AND 15E.): (I) 32665.0788; (II) 34018. (G) COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED: (I) 138313.1698; (II) 145683. (H) TOTAL (SUM OF 15F. AND G.): (I) 170978.2486; (II) 179701. (I) PERCENT PAID (15C. DIVIDED BY 15F. TIMES 100): (I) 0.966445306; (II) 0.972073608. 17. PUBLICATION OF STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP: PUBLICATION REQUIRED. WILL BE PRINTED IN THE OCTOBER 26, 2015 ISSUE OF THIS PUBLICATION. 18. SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF EDITOR, PUBLISHER, BUSINESS MANAGER, OR OWNER: DAVID LECKEY, EVP, CONSUMER MARKETING. DATE: 42277. I CERTIFY THAT ALL INFORMATION FURNISHED ON THIS FORM IS TRUE AND COMPLETE. I UNDERSTAND THAT ANYONE WHO FURNISHES FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION ON THIS FORM OR WHO OMITS MATERIAL OR INFORMATION REQUESTED ON THE FORM MAY BE SUBJECT TO CRIMINAL SANCTIONS (INCLUDING FINES AND IMPRISONMENT) AND/OR CIVIL SANCTIONS (INCLUDING CIVIL PENALTIES).

Limited Mintage Striking...

# WORLD'S FIRST

## The 2015 \$100 SILVER PROOF

LAST CHANCE  
AT \$99



**GovMint.com Announces the Limited Mintage Striking of an Extraordinary Silver Proof—the Newest United States \$100 Bill Struck in Pure Silver. Last chance at \$99!**

This extraordinary piece of pure silver has a surface area that exceeds 15 square inches...and it contains one Troy ounce of pure silver!

And now, during a limited strike period,

the very first Year 2015 \$100 Silver Proof is available from GovMint.com at a special discount price—only \$99!

### Exquisite Detail

The historic 2015 \$100 Silver Proof is an exquisite adaptation of the United States Treasury's recently redesigned \$100 Federal Reserve Note—only the third new \$100 bill design in 100 years. It is a true artistic masterpiece that will always be treasured.

### 99.9% Silver

Best of all, this stunning Silver Proof is even more beautiful than the original, because it's struck in precious silver!

GovMint.com • 14101 Southcross Dr. W. Dept. FRN204-02 • Burnsville, Minnesota 55337

Prices and availability subject to change without notice. Facts and figures deemed accurate as of September 2015.  
NOTE: GovMint.com® is a private distributor of worldwide government coin and currency issues and privately issued and licensed collectibles, and is not affiliated with the United States government. GovMint.com is not an investment company and does not offer financial advice or sell items as an investment. The collectible coin market is speculative, and coin values may rise or fall over time. All rights reserved. © 2015 GovMint.com. FREE SHIPPING: Limited time only. Product total over \$150 before taxes (if any). Standard shipping only. Not valid on previous purchases.

It is a landmark in proof minting, combining unprecedented weight with extraordinary dimension. The specifications for this colossal metallic proof are unparalleled.

Each one:

- Is Individually Struck from Pure 99.9% Silver.
- Weighs one Troy ounce.
- Has a Surface Area That Exceeds 15 Square Inches.
- Contains 31.10 Grams (480 Grains) of Pure Silver.
- Is Individually Registered and Comes With a Numbered Certificate of Authenticity.
- Is Fully Encapsulated to Protect Its Mirror-Finish.
- Includes a Deluxe Presentation Case.

**Exclusive Opportunity**  
Soon, the price for the 2015 \$100 Silver Proof will be set at \$129 per proof.

**This may be your LAST CHANCE to acquire this giant silver proof for only \$99 each. (plus s/h)**

**NOTE TO COLLECTORS:** When you place your order for the \$100 silver proof, it will be processed immediately, and the earliest orders will receive the coveted lowest registration numbers.

### Additional Discounts

Substantial additional discounts are available for serious collectors who wish to acquire more than one of these exquisite silver proofs.

### Year 2015 \$100 Silver Proof

1 proof - \$99 each + s/h  
2-4 proofs - \$99 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
5-9 proofs - \$95 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
10-20 proofs - \$89 each + **FREE SHIPPING**

**FREE SHIPPING on 2 or More!**

There is a limit of twenty \$100 Silver Proofs per order, and all orders are subject to acceptance by GovMint.com.

### Only 9999 Available

GovMint.com will limit striking to only 9999 One Troy Ounce Silver Proofs for the year 2015. Once the edition is sold out, no more 2015 silver proofs can ever be struck. *With more than half of the edition already gone, we urge you to call today.*

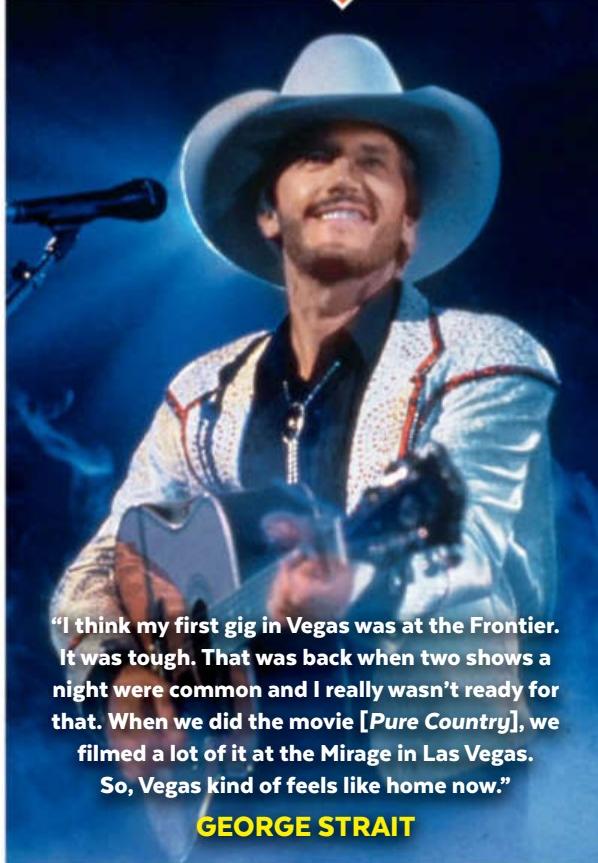
For fastest service call today toll-free  
**1-800-514-6468**

Offer Code FRN204-02  
Please mention this code when you call.



**GovMINT.COM®**

THE BEST SOURCE FOR COINS WORLDWIDE™



## GOOBER COUNTRY

There's a sackful of young country talent hailing from the great state of Georgia, which is known as the "Goober State" for its peanut production. Georgia natives **THOMAS RHETT**, 25, **TYLER HUBBARD**, 28, **BRANTLEY GILBERT**, 30, **COLE SWINDELL**, 32, and **KIP MOORE**, 35, are all less than a decade apart in age.

## FIRST RATE

**CRAIG MORGAN**, a 15-year U.S. Army veteran, served as a member of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions—infantry divisions known for their air assaults. In the 1998 movie *Saving Private Ryan*, title character James Ryan, played by Matt Damon, was also a member of the 101st.



## 9 LIVES



The Oak Ridge Boys'  
**JOE BONSALL** was

a featured vocalist on Sawyer Brown's 1986 single "Out Goin' Cattin'." He was credited as "Cat Joe Bonsall" on the tune, which peaked at No. 11 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart.



## STURGILL SIMPSON BY THE NUMBERS

- 1** 2015 GRAMMY NOMINATION
- 2** 2015 AMERICANA MUSIC AWARDS
- 3** consecutive SOLD-OUT RYMAN SHOWS (Oct. 30-Nov. 1)
- 4** days to record live-to-tape 2014's **METAMODERN SOUNDS IN COUNTRY MUSIC**
- 5** late-night talk show gigs:  
**DAVID LETTERMAN** (2),  
**JIMMY FALLON** (2),  
**SETH MEYERS** (1)





# COLD WEATHER CLASSICS

## WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

Winter is on the horizon,  
and Boot Barn has all of your cold  
weather classics to get you ready.  
From western and work boots to jeans,  
shirts and hats, we'll outfit you just  
right - from head to toe.  
We've got all the best brands, at the  
lowest prices, guaranteed.

Bring this ad to any one of our  
over 200 stores and get

**15% OFF**

one item. Shopping online?

Enter promo code PUB-CW1015.

**B** **BOOT**  
**BARN**®

America's Largest Western & Work Store

[bootbarn.com](http://bootbarn.com)

\*Offer valid in-store or online. Offer valid on one regularly priced item only. Must surrender coupon at time of purchase. May not be combined with any other offer or discount.

Offer valid 10/16/15 through 12/3/15.

Offer excludes Wrangler® styles 13MWZ Rigid, 47MWZ Rigid, and 936DEN Rigid, Levi's® styles 501STF, all UGG® Australia products, all Brighton® products and gift cards.

Additional exclusions may apply online. To use online, enter coupon code PUB-CW1015.

# CARRIE UNDERWOOD STORYTELLER

FEATURES THE SMASH HIT  
**SMOKE BREAK**

NEW ALBUM AVAILABLE OCTOBER 23RD

CARRIE UNDERWOOD  
STORYTELLER

[CARRIEUNDERWOODOFFICIAL.COM](http://CARRIEUNDERWOODOFFICIAL.COM)

 /CARRIEUNDERWOOD

  @CARRIEUNDERWOOD

© 2015 Sony Music Entertainment

ARISTA

NAKED